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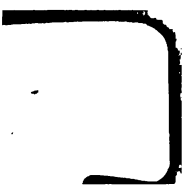

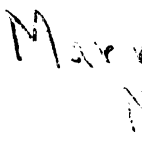

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April 6th 1822.

MORAL TALES,

By

M. MARMONTEL.

Laurette after her return to her father's vineyard. pa. 208.

LONDON.

Printed for F. C. & J. Rivington, and the other Proprietors April 6th.

1821.

MORAL TALES.

BY

M. MARMONTEL.

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LIFE OF MARMONTEL.

JOHN FRANCIS MARMONTEL, one of the most distinguished French writers of the eighteenth century, was born in 1723, at Bort, a small town in Limosin. His father, who was in very moderate circumstances, and had a very large family, bestowed great pains on this, his eldest son, and was ably assisted in the cultivation of his talents by his wife, who appears to have been a woman of superior sense and information. Young Marmontel first studied the classics and rhetoric, in the Jesuits' college of Mauriac; and at fifteen was placed by his father with a merchant at Clermont. As this, however, was very little to his taste, he applied for admission into the college of Clermont; where, after being received into the philosophical class, he maintained himself by teaching some of the junior scholars. He afterwards went to Toulouse, and became teacher of philosophy in a seminary of the Ber-

nardines, where his abilities acquired considerable distinction.

Encouraged by this, he was a candidate for one of the prizes given by the Academy of Floreal Games at Toulouse; but the ode which he wrote on this occasion being rejected, he sent a copy of it to Voltaire, who not only returned it with high praise, but sent him a copy of his works. To a young man like Marmontel, nothing could be more gratifying than the praises and kindness of a man of such high rank in the literary world; and, eager to justify Voltaire's good opinion, he applied more closely to his studies, and obtained the prizes of several succeeding years. It is much to his honour, that while his reputation increased, and his income became considerable, he devoted the latter to the maintenance of his family.

By Voltaire's advice, he repaired to Paris in 1745, to try his fortune as a man of letters. His first attempts were of the dramatic kind, which had various success, but never enough to render him independent of other employment. His first tragedy, 'Denys le Tiran,' indeed, succeeded so well as to give him a name, and introduce him into the higher circles; but this

led him at the same time into a course of dissipation, of which he afterwards repented, and which he relinquished, upon being promoted to the place of Secretary to the Royal Buildings, by the interest of Madame Pompadour.

We find him afterwards connected with D'Alembert and Diderot, in the compilation of the Encyclopedie, which is supposed to have had no small share in producing the French Revolution. Of this too, however, he lived to repent, as his attachments were to the royal cause, while he held that changes, to a certain degree, were necessary. He afterwards became a writer for the Mercure François; and it was in this publication that he wrote those Tales which are now before the reader. In 1758, he became sole editor of the Mercure, which he very greatly improved; but having, in a gay party, repeated a satire on the Duke d'Aumont, which was not his own writing, and having refused to give up the author, he was sent to the Bastile, and lost his situation in the Mercure.

His confinement was short, and the reputation his Tales acquired in every part of Europe procured him riches and distinction. After gaining the prize of the French Academy, by his

'Epitre aux Poetes,' though Thomas and Delille were his competitors, he was admitted into the academy, in 1763, as successor to Marivaux. His fame was afterwards completely established by his 'Belisarius,' and his 'Les Incas;' in both which he introduced sentiments of greater liberality than were agreeable to the French ecclesiastics.

After the death of D'Alembert, in 1783, he was elected perpetual secretary to the French Academy, where his employment was to compose eloges on the deceased members, and other pieces to be read in the Academy, both in prose and verse. Under the ministry of Lamoignon, keeper of the seals, he was solicited to draw up a memoir on national education, which was a very elaborate composition; but the commencement of the revolution prevented the progress of this undertaking.

As the revolution advanced, he withdrew himself from all share in those proceedings which ended in scenes of blood and violence, and retired to a distant part, where he employed his time in the education of his children, and in the composition of some works which have added considerably to his reputation. In 1797, he was

once more called into public life, by being elected a representative in the National Assembly; but after this assembly was dissolved, he again retired to his cottage, where he died of an apoplexy, Dec. 1799, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

He was fifty-four before he married; but this step, there is every reason to think, added much to his felicity, and secured the regular habits of his life. His reputation as a writer, although it was gradually augmented by his various publications, his plays, operas, poems, eloges, and other compositions on miscellaneous subjects, rests now principally on his Tales, in this country, and on his Belisarius and Incas on the Continent. His Tales have never been surpassed for lively and characteristic dialogue and sentiment, and have been such universal favourites, that there is no European language into which they have not been translated. They speak, indeed, to the passions of general nature; and, although the author's imagination is not always under the strictest guidance of his judgment, the latter will be found strikingly predominant in the interesting, and, at the same time, very difficult species of writing, the characteristic.

So valuable have they appeared to dramatic writers in this respect, that they have formed not only the plot, but much of the dialogue of some very favourite pieces, both on the English and French stage.

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

HAVING been engaged for some time since in writing upon comedy, I searched into nature for the rules and means of the art. This study led me to examine if it were true, as has been said, that all the great strokes of ridicule had been seized by Moliere, and the poets who have followed him.

In running over the canvas of society, I thought I perceived that in the inexhaustible combinations of follies and extravagancies of all conditions, a man of genius might still find sufficient employment. I had even collected some observations to propose to young poets, when my friend, M. de Boissi, desired me to supply him with some pieces in prose, to insert in the Mercure. It came into my head to make use, in a tale, of one of the strokes in my collection; and I chose, by way of essay, the ridiculous pretension of being loved merely for one's self. This tale had all the success that such a trifle could have. My friend pressed me to give him a second. I proposed to myself to display the folly of those who use authority to bring a woman to reason; and I chose for an example a sultan and his slave, as being the two extremes of power and dependence. This fresh essay also succeeded; and, pleased with having hit the taste of the public, in a species of writing which they deigned to look upon as new, I continued to exercise myself in it.

I shall say little concerning the style: when it is that speak, I deliver myself up to the actual impression of the sentiment, or image which I mean

to present: my subject furnishes me with the manner. When I make my characters speak, all the art I employ is to fancy myself present at their conversation, and to write down what I imagine I hear. In general, the most simple imitation of nature, in the manners and language, is what I have endeavoured in these tales: if they have not this merit, they have none.

I proposed, some years since, under the article *Dialogue*, in the Encyclopædia, to banish the *said he*, and *said she*, from lively and animated dialogue. I have made the experiment in these tales, and I think it has succeeded. This manner of rendering the narration more rapid is uncouth only at first; as soon as we are accustomed to it, it makes the talent of reading well appear with greater lustre.

The success which the story of *Soliman* has had upon the stage, as treated by a gentleman who writes with much ease and elegance, permits me to hope that the same use will be made of some of these little pictures of human life; and for the future I shall employ myself (as I have done in the three new tales, *The Good Husband*, *The Connoisseur*, and *School of Fathers*) in choosing stories easy to be brought upon the stage, in order to give authors less trouble.

MORAL TALES.

ALCIBIADES; OR, SELF.

NATURE and fortune seemed to have conspired towards the happiness of Alcibiades. Riches, talents, person, birth, the flower of youth, and of health; what titles for the possession of every foppery! Alcibiades had but one: he wanted to be loved for *himself* only. From the lightest coquette up to the greatest prude, he had seduced every female in Athens; but in loving him, was it really *himself* that they loved? This whimsical piece of delicacy seised him one morning as he was just come from paying his court to a prude: this is the moment for reflection. Alcibiades's thoughts turned upon what is called the *sentimental*, the *metaphysics* of love. 'I am a pretty fool,' said he, 'to throw away my attention on a woman who perhaps loves me only for her own sake! I will know the truth of it, by all the Gods! and if that be the case, she may look out among our prize-fighters for a lover to serve in my place.'

The charming prude, according to custom, still opposed some feeble resistance to the desires of Alcibiades. It was a dreadful affair! She could not even think of it without blushing! It was necessary to be smitten as deeply as she was, in order to come to such a resolution. She could have wished for all the world that he were less

young and less pressing. Alcibiades took her at her word. 'I perceive, madam,' said he one day, 'that these compliances cost you dear. Well, I am determined to give you a proof of the most perfect love. Yes, I consent, since you will have it so, that our *souls* only may be united, and I give you my word that I will ask nothing more.'

The prude commended this resolution with an air sufficient to have destroyed it. Alcibiades, however, kept to the text. She was surprised and piqued; but was obliged to dissemble.

The day following, every temptation which the most enchanting deshabille could afford was made use of. The liveliness of desire sparkled in her eyes; a voluptuous negligence in her air. The slightest covering, the most favourable disorder, every thing about her invited Alcibiades to forget himself. He perceived the snare. 'What a victory!' said he to her. 'Madam, what a victory have I now to gain over myself! I see plainly that Love is putting me to the trial, and I am glad of it. The delicacy of my sentiments shall appear with greater lustre. These coverings, so thin and transparent, these couches, of which Pleasure herself seems to have formed her throne, your beauty, my desires, how many enemies are these to subdue! Ulysses could not have escaped them; Hercules would have fallen before them. I will be wiser than Ulysses, and less frail than Hercules. Yes, I will convince you, that the single pleasure of loving can take place of all other pleasures.'—'You are a charming creature,' said she, 'and I may pride myself in having a very extraordinary lover; all I dread is, lest your passion should be weakened by its rigour.'—'On the contrary,' interrupted Alcibiades briskly, 'it will only become the more ardent.'—'But, my dear child, you are young; there are moments when we are not masters of ourselves; and I should think your fidelity in great danger, if I were to deliver you up to

your desires.'—'Be easy, madam; I will be answerable for every thing. If I can conquer my desires towards you, who is there towards whom I shall not be master of them?'—'You promise me, at least,' said she, 'that if they become too violent, you will fairly confess it? Do not let any mistaken bashfulness restrain you. Do not pique yourself on keeping your word with me: there is nothing I would not sooner pardon you than an instance of infidelity.'—'Yes, madam, I will confess my weakness to you, with the greatest sincerity in the world, whenever I am ready to yield to it; but suffer me, at least, to try my own strength: I feel that it will yet go a great way; and I hope that love will give me new force.' The prude was now quite enraged; but, without giving herself the lie, she could not complain. She still checked herself, in hopes that on a new trial Alcibiades would give way. He received the day after, as soon as he awoke, a billet conceived in these terms: 'I have passed a most cruel night; come to see me. I cannot live without you.'

He arrives at the prude's. Her window-curtains were but half open: a gentle day stole into the apartment, on waves of purple. The prude was yet in a bed strewed with roses. 'Come,' said she to him, with a plaintive voice, 'come, and ease my inquietudes. A frightful dream has disturbed me all night. I thought I saw you at the feet of a rival. Oh! I shudder at it even yet! I have already told you, Alcibiades, that I cannot live under the apprehensions of your proving unfaithful: my misfortune would be the more cutting, as I should myself be the cause; and I would at least have nothing to reproach myself. It is in vain for you to promise me, that you will subdue yourself; you are too young to be able to do so long. Do I not know you? I perceive that I have required too much of you; I am sensible that it is both imprudent and cruel to impose such hard terms on you.

As she spoke these words, with the most touching air in the world, Alcibiades threw himself at her feet. 'I am very unhappy, madam,' said he, 'if you have not a sufficient esteem for me, to believe me capable of attaching myself to you by the ties of sentiment only! After all, of what have I deprived myself? Of that which is a dishonour to love. I blush to see that you set any value on such a sacrifice. But were it as great as you imagine it, I should but have the more glory.'—'No, my dear Alcibiades,' said the prude, giving him at the same time her hand, 'I wish not for a sacrifice that costs you so dear: I am too well assured, and too much pleased with the pure and delicate love you have so fully testified for me. Be happy; I consent to it.'—'I am so, madam,' cried he, 'in the pleasure of living for you. Cease to suspect and complain of me; you see before you the most faithful, the most tender, and most respectful of lovers . . . .'—'And the foolishest,' interrupted she, drawing the curtains roughly, and calling to her slaves. Alcibiades sallied out in a rage, to find that he had been loved only like another man, and fully resolved never more to see a woman who had taken him merely for her own pleasure. 'It is not thus,' said he, 'that we love in the age of innocence; and if the young Glycerium should feel for me what her eyes seem to declare, I am very certain it must be love in its utmost purity.'

Glycerium, just fifteen years, began already to excite the wishes of the handsomest young men. Let us form to ourselves the image of a rose-bud just opening; such were the freshness and splendour of her beauty.

Alcibiades presented himself, and his rivals disappeared. It was not yet the custom at Athens to marry, in order to hate and despise one another the next day; but they gave the young folks time, before wedlock, to see and converse with each other with a becoming freedom: the young ladies did

not commit the care of their virtue to their guardians. They were discreet of themselves. Modesty did not begin to make a feeble resistance, till after it was robbed of the honours of victory. Glycerium's made the handsomest defence. Alcibiades omitted nothing to surprise or win her. He extolled the young Athenian lady for her talents, her graces, her beauty; he made her perceive, in every thing she said, a refinement she never meant to give it, and a delicacy of which she had not so much as thought.—What a pity, that with so many charms she was not endued with a sensible heart! 'I adore you,' said he to her, 'and I am happy if you love me. Do not be afraid to tell me so: an ingenuous candour is the virtue peculiar to your age. It is in vain that they have given the name of prudence to dissimulation: that beautiful mouth is not made to disguise the sentiments of your heart: let it rather be the organ of Love, since it was for himself that he formed it.'—'If you would have me be sincere,' replied Glycerium, with a modesty mingled with tenderness, 'contrive at least that I may be so without blushing. I would not disguise the sentiments of my heart, neither would I violate my duty; and I should betray either one or the other, if I were to say more.' Glycerium wished that their marriage should be agreed upon before she explained herself. Alcibiades wanted her to explain herself before they should think of marriage. 'It will be a fine time, indeed,' said he, 'to assure me of your love, when marriage shall have made it a duty, and I shall have reduced you to the necessity of counterfeiting: it is now that you are free, that it would please me to hear from that mouth the disinterested confession of a natural and pure sentiment.'—'Well, then! be content, and reproach me not with wanting a sensible heart; it has at least been so since I have seen you. I esteem you sufficiently to trust you with the secret of my heart; but now it has escaped me, I ask one

favour of you: it is, not to request any more private interviews, till you have adjusted the affair with those on whom I depend.' The confession which Alcibiades had just obtained would have completed the happiness of any other less difficult lover; but his whim still possessed him. He wanted still to see whether he was loved for *himself*. 'I will not conceal from you,' said he, 'that the offer which I am going to make may not be attended with success. Your relations receive me with a cold civility, which I should have taken for a dismission, if the pleasure I have in seeing you had not overcome my delicacy; but if I oblige your father to explain himself, there will no longer be any room for dissembling. He is a member of the Areopagus: Socrates, the most virtuous of men, is there suspected and odious: I am the friend and disciple of Socrates, and I greatly fear that the hatred they have for him may extend to me. My apprehensions, perhaps, carry me too far; but at last, if your father sacrifices us to his politics, if he refuses to give me your hand, what do you determine to do?'—'To be unhappy,' replied Glycerium, 'and to submit to my destiny.'—'You will see me then no more?'—'If they forbid me to see you, I must obey.'—'You will obey then also, if they propose another husband to you?'—'I shall become the victim of my duty.'—'And out of duty like wise you will love the husband they shall choose for you?'—'I shall endeavour not to hate him: but what questions you put to me! What would you think of me yourself, if I entertained any other sentiments?'—'That you loved me as you ought to love me.'—'It is too true that I do love you.'—'No, Glycerium, Love knows no law; he is above all obstacles: but to do you justice, this sentiment is too great for your age. It requires firm and courageous souls, whom difficulties animate, and ill-fortune does not shock. Such a passion, I confess, is rare. To wish for an estate, a name, and

a fortune at one's disposal; to throw one's self, in short, into the arms of a husband, to protect one against one's parents; this is what is now called love, but what I call a desire of independence.'—'This is downright tyranny,' said Glycerium, with tears in her eyes, 'to add injury to reproaches. I have said nothing to you, but what was tender and honest. Did I balance one moment to sacrifice my lovers to you? Did I hesitate to confess to you your triumphs? What is it you ask further of me?'—'I ask of you,' said he, 'to swear a constancy to me, proof against every thing; to swear to me, that you will be mine, whatever happens; and that you will be only mine.'—'Indeed, sir,' said she, 'that is what I will never do.'—'Indeed, madam, I ought to have expected this answer, and I blush that I have exposed myself to it.' At these words he retired, transported with anger, and saying to himself, 'I was well set to work to fall in love with a child, who has no soul, and whose heart disposes of itself only by the advice of her parents.'

There was in Athens a young widow who appeared inconsolable for the loss of her husband. Alcibiades paid her, as all the world did, his first devoirs, with that grave air which decorum enjoins towards persons afflicted. The widow found a sensible consolation in the discourses of this disciple of Socrates, and Alcibiades an inexpressible charm in the tears of the widow. Their moral discourses, however, grew more lively every day. They joined in praises on the good qualities of the deceased, and agreed as to his bad ones. He was the honestest man in the world! but his understanding, strictly speaking, was but ordinary. He had a pretty good figure, but without elegance or grace; full of attention and care, but his assiduity was tiresome. In short, she was in despair for having lost so good a husband, but fully resolved not to take a second. 'What,' said Alcibiades,

'at your age renounce matrimony!'—'I confess to you,' said the widow, 'that as averse as I am to slavery, yet liberty frightens me as much. At my age, delivered up to my own guidance, and being quite independent, what will become of me!' Alcibiades failed not to insinuate, that between the bondage of matrimony and the abandoned state of widowhood, there was a middle path; and that with respect to decorums, nothing in the world was easier to be reconciled to them than a tender attachment. She was startled at the proposition! she had rather die. Die at the age of loves and graces! it was easy to show the ridiculousness of such a project, and the widow dreaded nothing so much as ridicule. It was resolved, therefore, that she should not die; it was already decided that she could not even live without being protected by somebody; this somebody could be only a lover, and, without prejudice, she knew no man more worthy than Alcibiades to please and attach her. He redoubled his assiduities: at first she complained of them; in a short time she accustomed herself to them; at length she asked the meaning of them; and to avoid all imprudence, they settled matters decently.

Alcibiades was now at the pinnacle of his desires. It was neither the pleasures of love, nor the advantages of matrimony, that were to be loved in him; it was he *himself*, at least he imagined so. He triumphed over the grief, prudence, and pride of a woman, who required nothing in return but secrecy and love. The widow, on her side, plumed herself on holding under her dominion the object of the jealousy of all the beauties of Greece. But how few persons know how to enjoy without a confidante! Alcibiades, while a lover in secret, was only a common lover like another man, and the greatest triumph is no farther pleasing than in proportion as it is public. An author has said that it is not enough to be in a fine country, if we have no one to whom we can say, 'What a fine country!' The widow found, in

like manner, that it was not sufficient to have Alcibiades for a lover, if she could not tell any one 'I have Alcibiades for a lover.' She communicated it, therefore, in confidence, to an intimate friend, who communicated it again to her lover, and he to all Greece. Alcibiades, astonished that his adventure was become public, thought it his duty to acquaint the widow of it, who accused him of indiscretion. 'If I were capable of any such thing,' said he, 'I should suffer those reports to prevail, which I had been desirous of propagating; but I wish for nothing so much as to stifle them. Let us be upon our guard; let us avoid meeting in public; and whenever accident may happen to bring us together, be not offended at the strange and careless air I shall affect towards you.' The widow received all this but very indifferently.—'I perceive, indeed,' said she, 'that you will be the more at ease for it: assiduities and attention confine you too much, and you ask nothing better than the power of wandering. But for me, what sort of a countenance would you have me put on? I know not how to act the coquette: weary of every thing in your absence, pensive and embarrassed before you, I shall have the appearance of being trifled with, and, in fact, perhaps *shall* be so. If they are persuaded that you possess me, there is no remedy: the world is not to be brought back. Where will be the good, then, of this pretended mystery? We shall have the appearance, you of a disengaged lover, I of a forsaken mistress.' This answer from the widow surprised Alcibiades; her conduct completed his astonishment. Day after day she gave herself greater freedoms and liberty: at any public show she expected that he should be seated behind her, and that he should hand her to the temple, and be of the party in her walks and suppers. She affected above all things to have him among her rivals; and in the midst of them, it was her pleasure that he should see nobody but her: she commanded him in an

absolute tone of voice, viewed him with an eye of mystery, smiled at him with an air of meaning, and whispered him in the ear with that familiarity which betrays to the world the connexion there is between two persons. He saw plainly that she led him every where like a slave chained to her car.—'I have taken airs for sentiments,' said he, with a sigh: 'it is not *myself* that she loves; it is the glory of having conquered me: she would despise me if she had no rivals. Let me teach her that vanity is unworthy to fix love.'

The envy of the philosophers could not forgive Socrates, that he taught nothing in public but truth and virtue: they preferred every day to the Areopagus the heaviest complaints against this dangerous citizen. Socrates, employed in doing good, let them say all the harm of him they thought proper; but Alcibiades, devoted to Socrates, opposed his enemies. He presented himself before the magistrates; he reproached them with listening to base persons, and countenancing impostors; and spoke of his master as the justest and wisest of mortals. Enthusiasm creates eloquence: in the conferences which he had with one of the members of the Areopagus, in presence of the wife of the judge, he spoke with so much sweetness and vehemence, with so much sense and reason, his beauty glowed with a fire so noble and affecting, that this virtuous woman was affected to the bottom of her soul. She took her perturbation for admiration.—'Socrates,' said she to her spouse, 'is really a divine man, if he makes such disciples. I am charmed with the eloquence of this young man; it is impossible to hear him without improvement.' The magistrate, who was far from doubting the prudence of his wife, informed Alcibiades of the praises she bestowed on him. Alcibiades was pleased with them, and asked the husband's permission to cultivate the esteem of his wife. The good man invited him to his house.—'My wife,' said he, 'is a philosopher

too, and I shall be very glad to see you disputing together.' Rhodope (for that was the name of this respectable matron) prided herself indeed on her philosophy, and that of Socrates from the mouth of Alcibiades pleased her more and more. I forgot to mention, that she was of that age in which women are past being *pretty*, but in which they may still be reckoned *handsome;* in which perhaps they are a little less lovely, but in which they know better how to love. Alcibiades paid his devoirs to her. She distrusted neither him nor herself. The study of wisdom filled up all their conversations. The lessons of Socrates passed from the soul of Alcibiades into that of Rhodope, and in their passage gathered new charms: it was a rivulet of pure water running over flowers. Rhodope became every day more changed: she accustomed herself to define, according to the principles of Socrates, wisdom and virtue, truth and justice. Friendship came in its turn; and, after examining its essence, 'I should be glad,' said Rhodope, 'to know what difference Socrates makes between love and friendship?' 'Though Socrates is not one of those philosophers,' replied Alcibiades, 'who analyse every thing, yet he distinguishes three sorts of love: the one gross and base, which is common to us with other animals; that is to say, the impulse of necessity, and the relish of pleasure: the other pure and celestial, by which we approach the gods; this is the most ardent and tender friendship: lastly, the third, which participates of the two first, preserves the medium between the gods and the brutes, and seems the most natural to man; this is the union of souls cemented by that of the senses. Socrates gives the preference to the poor charm of friendship; but as he thinks it no crime in nature to contain spirit united to matter, so he thinks it none in man to savour of this mixture in his inclinations and pleasures. Above all, when Nature has taken pains to unite a fine person with a fine

soul, he would have us respect the work of Nature; for how ill-favoured soever Socrates may be himself, he does justice to beauty. If he knew, for example, with whom I hold these discourses concerning philosophy, I make no doubt but he would reproach me for having so ill employed my lessons.' 'A truce with your gallantry,' interrupted Rhodope: 'I am talking to a sage; and, young as he is, my wish is, that he would instruct, and not flatter me. Let us return to the principles of your master. He permits love, you say; but does he know its errors and excesses?'—'Yes, madam, as he knows those of drunkenness, and nevertheless allows the use of wine.'—'The comparison is not just,' said Rhodope; 'we may choose our wines, and moderate the use of them: have we the same liberty in love? It is without choice or measure.'—'Yes, without doubt,' rejoined Alcibiades, 'in a man without morals or principles; but Socrates begins by making men wise and virtuous, and it is to them only that he permits love. He well knows that they will love nothing but what is honest, and there we run no risk of loving to excess. The mutual inclination of two virtuous souls cannot but render them still more virtuous.' Every answer of Alcibiades removed some difficulty in the mind of Rhodope, and rendered her inclination for him more insinuating and rapid. There remained now only conjugal fidelity, and there was the Gordian knot. Rhodope was not one of those with whom one might cut it; there was a necessity of undoing it for her: Alcibiades sounded her at a distance. As they were one day on the subject of society, 'Necessity,' said Alcibiades, 'has united mankind, common interest has regulated their duties, and the abuses of them have produced laws. All this is sacred; but all this is foreign to our soul. As men are connected but externally, the mutual duties which they impose upon each other pass not beyond the surface. Nature alone is the legislatress of the heart: she

alone can inspire with gratitude, friendship, love. Sentiment cannot be a duty by institution. Thence comes it, for example, that in marriage we can neither promise nor require any more than corporal attachment.' Rhodope, who had relished the principle, was terrified at the consequence.—'What,' said she, 'could I have promised my husband only *to behave* as if I loved him!'—'What else was it in your power to promise him?'—'To love him in reality,' replied she, in a very indeterminate tone of voice.—'He has promised you then in his turn to be not only amiable, but of all men the most amiable in your eyes?'—'He has promised me to do all in his power towards it, and he keeps his word.'—'Very well, you also do all in your power to love him only; yet neither the one nor the other of you are sure of success.'—'This is frightful philosophy,' cried Rhodope.—'Happily, madam, it is not so frightful: there would be too many criminals, if conjugal love were an essential duty.'—'What, sir, do you doubt it?'—'I doubt nothing, madam; but my frankness may displease you, and I do not see you disposed to imitate it. I thought I was speaking to a philosopher, but I find I was speaking only to a woman of a lively genius. I retire, confounded at my mistake; but I would give you at parting an instance of sincerity. I believe I have morals as pure, as honest, as the most virtuous woman: I know too full as well as she to what the honour and religion of an oath engages us; I know the laws of marriage, and the crime of violating them: however, had I married a thousand women, I should not have reproached myself in the least for thinking you alone handsomer, and a thousand times more amiable than these thousand women put together. According to you, in order to be virtuous, we must have neither heart nor eyes: I congratulate you on being arrived at such a degree of perfection.'

This discourse, pronounced with a tone of vexation and anger, left Rhodope in an astonishment

from which she had some difficulty to recover. From that time Alcibiades discontinued his visits. She had discovered in his adieus a warmer interest than that occasioned by the heat of the dispute: she perceived on her own side that the loss of his philosophical conferences was not what she regretted most. A dislike of every thing, a disgust to herself, a secret repugnance to the attentions of her husband, lastly, the confusion and blushes which the name alone of Alcibiades created, all these things made her dread the danger of seeing him again; and yet she burnt with the desire of seeing him once more. Her husband brought him back to her. As she had given him to understand that they had differed a little in a dispute concerning words, the magistrate rallied Alcibiades on it, and obliged him to return. The interview was grave; the husband amused himself with it some time; but his affairs soon called him away.—'I leave you,' said he to them, 'and I hope, that after having quarrelled about words, you will come to a reconciliation upon things.' The good man meant no harm; but his wife could not help blushing for him.

After a pretty long silence, Alcibiades began.—'Our conferences, madam, were once my delight, and with all the tendency imaginable to dissipation, you had taught me to relish and prefer the charms of solitude. I was no longer one of the world, I was no longer myself; I was wholly and entirely yours. Think not that a foolish hope of seducing and leading you astray had stolen into my soul: virtue, much more than wit and beauty, had enslaved me to your laws. But loving you with a passion as delicate as it was tender, I flattered myself I should have inspired you with the like. This pure and virtuous love offends you, or rather is only troublesome to you; for it is impossible that you should condemn it in reality. All that I feel for you, madam, you yourself feel for another; you have confessed it to me. I cannot reproach you on

the account, nor complain of it; but allow that I am not happy. There is perhaps but one woman in Athens who really has a love for her husband, and it is for this very woman that I am distracted.' —'Indeed you are a great simpleton for the disciple of a sage,' said Rhodope with a smile. He replied very gravely; she answered again jeeringly; he took her by the hand, she grew angry; he kissed her hand, she would have withdrawn; he detained her, she blushed; and the heads of both the philosophers were turned topsy-turvy.

It is unnecessary to say how much Rhodope was grieved, and how she consoled herself. All this is easily supposed in a virtuous and captivated woman.

She trembled above all for the honour and peace of her husband. Alcibiades swore inviolable secrecy; but the malice of the public rendered any indiscretion on his part absolutely needless. It was well known that he was not the sort of man to talk for ever about philosophy to an amiable woman. His assiduities created suspicions; suspicions in the world always go as far as certainties. It was decided that Alcibiades *had* Rhodope. The report came to the ears of her husband: he was far from giving credit to it; but his honour, and that of his wife, required that she should put herself above suspicion. He spoke to her of the necessity of putting away Alcibiades with so much good humour, reason, and confidence, that she had not the courage to reply. Nothing more grievous to a soul naturally sensible and virtuous than the receiving marks of esteem which it no longer deserves.

Rhodope from that moment resolved never more to see Alcibiades; and the more weakness she perceived in herself towards him, the more firmness she displayed in her resolution of breaking with him. In vain did he endeavour to subdue her by his eloquence.—'I have suffered myself to be persuaded,' said she to him, 'that the secret injuries we do a husband were nothing; but the very appearances of them become real injuries from the

moment they attack his honour, or disturb his peace. I may be willing to believe that I am not obliged to love my husband; but to render him happy, as far as in me lies, is an indispensable duty.'—'So then, madam, you prefer his happiness to mine?'—'I prefer,' said she to him, 'my engagements to my inclinations: this word, which has now escaped me, shall be my last weakness.'—'Alas! I thought myself beloved,' cried Alcibiades with displeasure. 'Farewell, madam: I see plainly that I owed my happiness only to the caprice of a moment. See! these are our virtuous women!' continued he. 'When they take to us, it is an excess of love; when they forsake us, it is an effort of virtue: and at the bottom this love and this virtue are nothing more than a mere phantasy, which seizes them at one time and leaves them at another.'—'I have deserved this affront,' said Rhodope, bursting into tears. 'A woman who has not maintained a proper respect for herself is not to expect it from others. It is very just that our weaknesses should bring us into contempt.'

Alcibiades, after so many proofs, was thoroughly convinced, that there was no longer any dependence upon women; but he had not confidence enough in himself to expose himself to new dangers; and fully resolved as he was not to love again, he yet perceived in a confused manner the necessity of loving.

In this secret inquietude, while he was walking one day on the sea-shore, he saw a woman advancing towards him, whose gait and beauty might have made him take her for a goddess, if he had not discovered her to be the courtesan Erigone. He would have shunned her, but she made up directly to him. 'Alcibiades,' said she, 'philosophy will make a fool of you. Tell me, my dear boy, is it a time at your age to bury one's-self alive in these chimerical and melancholy ideas? Take my advice, and be happy; we have always time enough to be wise.'—'I have no ambition to be wise,' said

he to her, 'but in order to be happy.'—'A pretty road indeed to happiness! Do you think I wear myself out in the study of wisdom? Not I. And yet is there any of your honest women more content with her condition? This Socrates has spoiled you: it is a pity; but yet there is a cure for you, if you will take some lessons from me. I have had a design upon you for some time: I am young, handsome, and sensible; and I believe I may say, without vanity, of as much value as any long-bearded philosopher of them all. They teach mortification; horrible science! Come to my school, and I will teach you the art of enjoyment.'—'I have learnt it but too well, to my cost,' replied Alcibiades: 'ostentation and pleasure have ruined me. I am no longer that opulent and magnificent person whom his follies rendered so famous, and I have not at present even a support but at the expense of my creditors.'—'Very well, and is it that which chagrins you? Be comforted: I have gold and jewels in abundance, and the follies of others shall serve to repair thine.'—'You flatter me greatly,' replied Alcibiades, 'by these obliging offers: but I shall not make an ill use of them.'—'What d'ye mean by this delicacy? Does not love make all things common? Besides, I will imagine that you owe any thing to me, [illegible] are not fool enough to boast of it, and I have too much pride to publish it myself.'—'You surprise me; for, to say the truth, you have the character of being avaricious.'—'Avaricious! Ay, to be sure, with those whom I do not love, in order to be lavish to the man that I love. My diamonds are very dear to me, but you are still dearer: if you want them, say but the word: to-morrow I will sacrifice them to you.'—'Your generosity,' replied Alcibiades, 'confounds and penetrates me: I would give you the pleasure of exercising it, if I were able at least to show my gratitude like a young fellow; but I ought not to dissemble with you,

that the immoderate use of pleasures has not only ruined my fortune, but I have found out the secret of growing old before my time.'—'I believe so,' replied Erigone smiling, 'you have known so many virtuous women! But I am going to surprise you still more: a lively and delicate sentiment is all that I expect from you; and if your heart too is not ruined, you have yet enough to satisfy me.'—'You rally!' said Alcibiades. 'Not at all. If I took a Hercules for a lover, I should wish him to prove himself a Hercules; but I would have Alcibiades love me only like Alcibiades, with all the delicacy of that tranquil pleasure whose source is in the heart. If on the sensual side you intend me any surprise, so much the better! I allow you every thing, and exact nothing.'—'Indeed,' said Alcibiades, 'I am as much charmed as astonished; and but for the uneasiness and jealousy I should feel on account of my rivals....'—'Rivals! you shall have none but unfortunate ones, I give you my word. Trust me, my friend, women do not change but ei[illegible] through coquetry or curiosity; and with me, [illegible]now, both the one and the other are exhaus[illegible] If I were unacquainted with mankind, the [illegible] now make you might be a little rash; but [illegible]g them to you, I know very well what I [illegible]pg. After all, there is one certain way of m[illegible] you easy: you have a farm at a good distance from Athens, where no impertinents will come to trouble us. Do you think yourself capable of supporting a *tête-à-tête* there with me? We will set out whenever you will.'—'No,' said he to her, 'my engagements detain me for some time in town; but if we should settle matters together, need we advertise ourselves?'—'Just as you please: if you think proper to own me, I shall proclaim you; if you choose secrecy, I will be more discreet and reserved than a prude. As I am dependent on nobody, [illegible]e you merely for your own sake, I neither [illegible] nor desire to attract, the eyes of the

public. Put no constraint on yourself; consult your heart; and if I am agreeable to you, my supper is ready for us. Let us go and call the gods of joy and pleasure to witness to our vows.' Alcibiades seized Erigone by the hand, and kissed it with transport. 'At last,' said he, 'I have found true love; and from this day my happiness commences.'

They arrive at the courtesan's. The most delicate and exquisite of every thing that taste could invent to gratify all the senses at once, seemed to have concurred in this supper to enchant Alcibiades. It was in such an apartment that Venus received Adonis, when the Loves poured out nectar, and the Graces served ambrosia. 'When I took,' said Erigone, 'the name of one of the mistresses of Bacchus, I did not flatter myself with possessing one day a mortal handsomer than the conqueror of India. What do I say? a mortal! It is Bacchus, Apollo, and the God of Love himself, that I possess; and I am this moment the happy rival of Erigone, Calliope, and Psyché. I crown you then, my young god, with the vine-leaf, the laurel, and the myrtle. May I be able to bring before your eyes all the attractions adored by those immortals, whose charms are united in you.' Alcibiades, intoxicated with self-love and desire, displayed all those enchanting talents which might have seduced wisdom itself. He sung his triumph on the lyre: he compared his happiness to that of the gods; and he found himself happier than they, as he had before been found to be more amiable.

After supper he was conducted into a neighbouring apartment; but separated from that of Erigone. 'Repose yourself, my dear Alcibiades,' said she, leaving him: 'may love possess you in your dreams of nothing but me! Vouchsafe at least to make me believe so; and if any other object should present itself to your imagination, spare my delicacy, and by a complaisant falsehood repair the involun-

tary wrong you shall have done me in your sleep.' —'Ah, what!' replied Alcibiades tenderly, 'will you reduce me to the pleasure of illusion?'—'You shall never have with me,' said she, 'any other laws than your desires.' At these words she withdrew into her own apartment, humming a tune.

Alcibiades cried out in a transport of joy, 'O modesty! O virtue! what then are ye, if in a heart where you reside not there is found pure and chaste love; love, such as it descended from the skies to animate man while yet innocent, and to embellish human nature?' In this excess of joy and admiration he gets up, and goes to surprise Erigone.

Erigone received him with a smile. Inspired with a sensibility tempered with delicacy, her heart seemed only to take fire from the desires of Alcibiades. Two months glided away in this delicious union, without the courtesan's ever belying for one moment the character she had assumed; but the fatal day now approached that was to dissipate so flattering an illusion.

The preparations for the Olympic Games engrossed the conversation of all the youth of Athens. Erigone spoke of these games, and of the glory of bearing away the prize in them, with so much warmth, that she made her lover form the design of entering into the course, and conceive a hope of triumphing. But he wanted to delight her by an agreeable surprise.

The day on which these games were to be celebrated, Alcibiades left her in order to repair thither. 'If they should see us together,' said he, 'at these spectacles, they would not fail of drawing inferences; and we have agreed to avoid even suspicion. Let us repair to the circus each on different sides. We will return here after the feast, and I expect you at supper.'

The people assemble, and seat themselves. Erigone presents herself, and attracts the eyes of all. The handsome women view her with envy, the

ugly with indignation; the old men with regret, and the young with universal transport. However, the eyes of Erigone, wandering over the vast amphitheatre, looked for nothing but Alcibiades. All on a sudden she saw appear before the barrier the coursers and the chariot of her lover. She durst not believe her eyes; but soon after a young man, more beautiful than the God of Love, and more gallant than Mars, vaults into the glittering car. It is Alcibiades; it is he himself! The name passes from mouth to mouth; she hears no longer any thing around her but these words: 'It is Alcibiades, the glory and ornament of the Athenian youth.' Erigone turned pale with joy: he cast a look at her, which seemed to be the presage of victory. The chariots range themselves in a line, the barrier opens, the signal is given, the ground resounds in cadence under the feet of the horses, a cloud of dust enfolds them. Erigone no longer breathes: all her soul is in her eyes, and her eyes pursue the chariot of her lover through the clouds of dust. The chariots separate, the swiftest get the start, that of Alcibiades is of the number. Erigone, trembling, puts up vows to Castor, to Pollux, to Hercules, to Apollo. At last she perceives Alcibiades at the head, and having only one who kept pace with him. It was then that fear and hope held her soul suspended. The wheels of the two chariots seemed to turn on the same axle, and the horses guided by the same reins. Alcibiades redoubles his ardour, and the heart of Erigone begins to dilate: his rival increases his speed, and the heart of Erigone shuts itself up again: every alternate revolution produces a sudden change in her. The two chariots arrive at the goal; but Alcibiades's antagonist has outstripped him by a single shoot forwards. Immediately a thousand cries made the air resound with the name of Pisicrates of Samos. Alcibiades, confounded, retires in his chariot; his head hung down, and the reins floating loosely,

avoiding that side of the circus where Erigone, overwhelmed with confusion, had hid her face beneath her veil. It appeared to her as if all eyes were fixed upon her to reproach her for loving a man who had just been conquered. A general murmur, however, is heard around her; she looks up to see the cause; it is Pisicrates who is bringing back his chariot on the side where she is placed. A new occasion of confusion and grief! But what is her surprise, when the chariot stopping at her feet, she sees the conqueror alight, and present her with the Olympic crown! 'I owe it to you, madam,' said he, 'and I come to pay you the homage of it.' Let us conceive, if possible, all the emotions of the soul of Erigone at this speech; but love was predominant. 'You owe me nothing,' said she to Pisicrates, blushing; 'my wishes, pardon my frankness, my wishes were not for you.'—'The desire of conquering before you,' replied he, 'has not the less on that account acquired me this glory. If I have not been happy enough to interest you in the contention, let me be at least sufficiently so to interest you in the triumph.' He then pressed her anew, with the most affecting air, to receive his offering: all the people invited her to it by redoubled shouts of applause. Self-love at length prevailed over love for Alcibiades; she received the fatal laurel, to yield, she said, to the acclamations and instances of the people: but who could believe it? She received it with a smiling air, and Pisicrates remounted his chariot, intoxicated with love and glory.

As soon as Alcibiades was recovered of his first dejection, 'You are very weak, and very vain,' said he to himself, 'to afflict yourself to this immoderate degree! and for what? because there is found in the world one man more dexterous, or more happy, than thyself. But I see what it is that torments you: you would have been transported to have conquered in the presence of Erigone; and

you dread the thought of being loved less, after being vanquished. Do her more justice: Erigone is not like the ordinary run of women; she will be pleased with you for the ardour you have shown to conquer; and as to your ill success, she will be the first to make you blush for your sensibility on so small a misfortune. Let me go and see her with confidence; I have even cause to rejoice at this moment of adversity: it is a new trial of her heart, and love contrives me a triumph more pleasing than that of the course.' Full of these consoling ideas, he arrives at Erigone's, but finds the chariot of the conqueror at the door.

This was a clap of thunder to him. Shame, indignation, despair, seize his soul. Distracted and raging, his disordered steps turn, as it were of themselves, to the house of Socrates.

The good man, who had been present at the games, ran out to meet him.—'So!' said he, 'you come to console yourself with me, because you have been vanquished. I dare say, young man, that I should not have seen you, had you triumphed. I am not, however, the less thankful for the visit. I love to have people come to me in adversity. A soul intoxicated with its good fortune vents itself wherever it can; the confidence of a soul in affliction is more flattering and affecting. Confess, however, that your horses did miracles. Why, you missed of the prize only by one spring. You may boast, therefore, that, next to Pisierates of Samos, you have the best coursers in all Greece; and indeed it is a most glorious thing for a man to have excellent horses!' Alcibiades, confounded at his misfortune, did not even hear the raillery of Socrates. The philosopher, guessing at the trouble of his heart by the alteration of his countenance, 'What then!' said he to him in a graver tone, 'does a trifle, a mere childish amusement, affect you thus? If you had lost an empire, I could scarce pardon your being in the state of humilia-

tion and dejection wherein I now see you.'—'Ah! my dear master,' cried Alcibiades, coming to himself, 'how unhappy are we in having sensibility! We ought to have a soul of marble to live in the age we do.'—'I confess,' replied Socrates, 'that sensibility costs us dear sometimes; but it is so good a quality, that we cannot pay to odear for it. Let us know, however, what has befallen you.'

Alcibiades recounted to him his adventures with the prude, the young lady, the widow, the magistrate's wife, and the courtesan, who at that very instant had just sacrificed him to another.—'What is it that you bemoan yourself for?' said Socrates, after hearing his complaint: 'it appears to me that each of them loved you after her manner with the greatest sincerity in the world. The prude, for example, loved pleasure; she found it in you: you deprive her of it, she dismisses you; and so with the rest. It was their *own* happiness, never doubt it, that they sought in their lover. The young lady saw in you a husband whom she could love with freedom and decency; the widow, a glorious triumph which did honour to her beauty; the magistrate's wife, an amiable and discreet man, with whom, without either danger or noise, her philosophy and her virtue might take some relaxation; the courtesan, a man admired, applauded, and universally desired, whom she should have the secret pleasure of possessing alone, while all the beauties of Greece should vainly dispute with each other the glory of captivating him.'—'You confess then,' said Alcibiades, 'that not one of them loved me for *myself*.'—'For *yourself*!' cried the philosopher: 'ah! my dear child! who has put this ridiculous pretension into your head? None love but for themselves. Friendship itself, purely sentimental as it is, founds its preferences only on personal interest: and if you demand that it should be disinterested, you may begin by renouncing mine. I am amazed,' pursued he, 'to see how foolish self-

love is, even in those who have the best understanding. I should be very glad to know what is this *self* that you would have them love in you? Birth, fortune, glory, youth, talents, and beauty, are but *accidents*. Nothing of all this is *yourself*, and yet this is all that renders you amiable. The *self*, which unites all these charms, is no more than the canvas of the tapestry. It is the embroidery that gives it value. In loving all these endowments in you, they confound them with you. Do not, I advise you, run into imaginary distinctions; and receive, as it is given you, the result of this mixture: it is a coin of which the alloy forms the consistence, but which loses its value in the crucible. I am not sorry that your delicacy has detached you from the prude and the widow; nor that the resolution of Rhodope, and the vanity of Erigone, have restored you to liberty: but I regret the loss of Glycerium, and advise you to return to her.'—'You jest!' said Alcibiades; 'she is a mere child, who only wants to be married.'—'Very well; you shall marry her then.'—'Did I hear right? Socrates advise to marriage!'—'Why not? If your wife be wise and reasonable, you will be a happy man; if she be a wanton, or a coquette, you will become a philosopher: you cannot, therefore, do otherwise than gain by it.'

SOLIMAN II.

It is pleasant to see grave historians racking their brains in order to find out great causes for great events. Sylla's valet-de-chambre would perhaps have laughed heartily to hear the politicians reason on the abdication of his master; but it is not of Sylla that I am now going to speak.

Soliman II. married his slave, in contempt of the laws of the sultans. It is natural at first to paint to ourselves this slave as an accomplished beauty, with an elevated soul, an uncommon genius, and a profound skill in politics. No such thing: the fact was as follows:

Soliman grew splenetic in the midst of his glory: the various, but ready pleasures of the seraglio, were become insipid to him. 'I am weary,' said he one day, 'of receiving here the caresses of mere machines. These slaves move my pity. Their soft docility has nothing poignant, nothing flattering. It is to hearts nourished in the bosom of liberty that it would be delightful to make slavery agreeable.'

The whimsies of a sultan are laws to his ministers. Large sums were instantly promised to such as should bring European slaves to the seraglio. In a short time there arrived three, who, like the three Graces, seemed to have divided among themselves all the charms of beauty.

Features noble and modest, eyes tender and languishing, an ingenuous temper and a sensible soul, distinguished the touching Elmira. The entrance of the seraglio, the idea of servitude, had chilled her with a mortal terror: Soliman found her in a swoon in the arms of his women. He approaches; he recals her to life; he encourages her; she lifts towards him a pair of large blue eyes bedewed with tears; he reaches forth his hand

to her; he supports her himself; she follows him with a tottering step. The slaves retire; and as soon as he is alone with her, 'It is not with fear, beautiful Elmira,' said he to her, 'that I would inspire you. Forget that you have a master; see in me only a lover.'—'The name of lover,' said she to him, 'is not less unknown to me than that of master: and both the one and the other make me tremble. They have told me (and I still shudder at the thought) that I am destined to your pleasures. Alas! what pleasure can it be to tyrannise over weakness and innocence? Believe me, I am not capable of the compliances of servitude; and the only pleasure possible for you to taste with me is that of being generous. Restore me to my parents and my country; and in the respect you show for my virtue, my youth, and my misfortunes, merit my gratitude, my esteem, and my regret.'

This discourse from a slave was new to Soliman: his great soul was moved by it. 'No,' said he, 'my dear child, I will owe nothing to violence. You charm me: I will make it my happiness to love and please you; and I prefer the torment of never seeing you more to that of seeing you unhappy. However, before I restore you to liberty, give me leave to try, at least, whether it be not possible for me to dissipate that terror which the name of slave strikes into you. I ask only one month's trial, after which, if my love cannot move you, I will avenge myself no otherwise on your ingratitude than by delivering you up to the inconstancy and perfidy of mankind.'—'Ah! my lord!' cried Elmira, with an emotion mixed with joy, 'how unjust are the prejudices of my country, and how little are your virtues known there! Continue such as I now see you, and I no longer reckon this day unfortunate.'

Some moments after, she saw slaves enter, carrying baskets filled with stuffs and valuable trinkets. 'Choose,' said the sultan to her: 'these are clothes,

not ornaments, that are here presented to you: nothing can adorn you.'—'Decide for me,' said Elmira to him, running her eyes over the baskets. 'Do not consult me,' replied the sultan: 'I hate, without distinction, every thing that can rob me of your charms.' Elmira blushed; and the sultan perceived she preferred the colours most favourable to the character of her beauty. He conceived a pleasing hope from that circumstance; for care to adorn one's self is almost a desire to please.

The month of trial passed away in timid gallantries on the part of the sultan, and on Elmira's side in complaisance and delicate attentions. Her confidence in him increased every day, without her perceiving it. At first he was not permitted to see her, but after the business of the toilette, and on condition to depart when she prepared to undress again; in a short time he was admitted both to her toilette and deshabille. It was there that the plan of their amusements for that day and the next was formed. Whatever either proposed was exactly what the other was going to propose. Their disputes turned only on the stealing of thoughts. Elmira, in these disputes, perceived not some small slips which escaped her modesty. A pin misplaced, or a garter put on unthinkingly, &c. afforded the sultan pleasures which he was cautious not to testify. He knew (and it was much for a sultan to know) that it was impolitic to advertise modesty of the dangers to which it exposes itself; that it is never fiercer than when alarmed; and that in order to subdue it, one should render them familiar. Nevertheless, the more he discovered of Elmira's charms, the more he perceived his fears increase, on account of the approach of the day that might deprive him of them.

The fatal period arrives. Soliman causes chests to be prepared, filled with stuffs, precious stones, and perfumes. He repairs to Elmira, followed by these presents. 'It is to-morrow,' said he, 'that I

have promised to restore you to liberty, if you still regret the want of it. I now come to acquit myself of my promise, and to bid adieu to you for ever.' —' What!' said Elmira, trembling, ' is it to-morrow? I had forgot it.'—' It is to-morrow,' resumed the sultan, ' that, delivered up to my despair, I am to become the most unhappy of men.'—' You are very cruel then to yourself, to put me in mind of it!'—' Alas! it depends only on you, Elmira, that I should forget it for ever.'—' I confess,' said she to him, ' that your sorrow touches me; that your proceedings have interested me in your happiness; and if, to show my gratitude, it were necessary only to prolong the time of my slavery—' ' No, madam. I am but too much accustomed to the happiness of possessing you. I perceive that the more I shall know of you, the more terrible it would be to me to lose you: this sacrifice would cost me my life; but I shall only render it the more grievous by deferring it. May your country prove worthy of you! May the people whom you are going to please deserve you better than I do! I ask but one favour of you, which is, that you would be pleased cordially to accept these presents as the feeble pledges of a love, the most pure and tender, that yourself, yes, that you yourself are capable of inspiring.'—' No,' said she to him, with a voice almost smothered, ' I will not accept of your presents. I go: you will have it so! But I shall carry away from you nothing but your image.' Soliman, lifting up his eyes to Elmira, met hers bedewed with tears. ' Adieu, then, Elmira!'—' Adieu, Soliman!' They bid each other so many and such tender adieus, that they concluded by swearing not to separate for life. The avenues of pleasure through which he had passed so rapidly with his slaves from Asia, appeared to him so delicious with Elmira, that he found an inexpressible charm in going through them step by step: but arrived at the happiness itself, his pleasures had from that time the same

defect as before; they became too easy of access, and in a short time after too languid. Their days, so well filled up till then, began to hang heavy. In one of these moments, when complaisance alone retained Soliman with Elmira, 'Would it be agreeable to you,' said he, 'to hear a slave from your own country, whose voice has been greatly commended to me?' Elmira, at the proposal, plainly perceived that she was lost: but to put any constraint on a lover who begins to grow tired is to tire him still more. 'I am for any thing,' said she, 'that you please;' and the slave was ordered to enter.

Delia (for that was the singer's name) had the figure of a goddess. Her hair exceeded the ebony in blackness, and her skin the whiteness of ivory. Two eyebrows, boldly arched, crowned her sparkling eyes. As soon as she began tuning, her lips, which were of the finest vermilion, displayed two rows of pearl set in coral. At first she sung the victories of Soliman, and the hero felt his soul elevated at the remembrance of his triumphs. His pride hitherto, more than his taste, applauded the accents of that thrilling voice, which filled the whole saloon with its harmony and strength.

Delia changed her manner, to sing the charms of pleasure. She then took the theorbo, an instrument favourable to the display of a rounded arm, and to the movements of a delicate and light hand. Her voice, more flexible and tender, now resounded none but the most touching sounds. Her modulations, connected by imperceptible gradations, expressed the delirium of a soul intoxicated with pleasure, or exhausted with sentiment. Her sounds, sometimes expiring on her lips, sometimes swelled, and sunk with rapidity, expressed by turns the sighs of modesty and the vehemence of desire; while her eyes, still more than her voice, animated these lively descriptions.

Soliman, quite transported, devoured her both

with his ears and eyes. 'No,' said he, 'never before did so beautiful a mouth utter such pleasing sounds. With what delight must she who sings so feelingly of pleasure inspire and relish it! How charming to draw that harmonious breath, and to catch again in their passage those sounds animated by love!' The sultan, lost in these reflections, perceived not that all the while he kept beating time on the knee of the trembling Elmira: her heart oppressed with jealousy, she was scarce able to breathe. 'How happy is Delia,' said she, in a low voice, to Soliman, 'to have so tuneable a voice! Alas! it ought to be the organ of my heart! every thing that she expresses, you have taught me to feel.' So said Elmira, but Soliman did not listen to her.

Delia changed her tone a second time to inconstancy. All that the changeful variety of nature contains, either interesting or amiable, was recapitulated in her song. It seemed like the fluttering of the butterfly over roses, or like the zephyrs, losing themselves among the flowers. 'Listen to the turtle,' said Delia; 'she is faithful but melancholy. See the inconstant sparrow: pleasure moves his wings; his warbling voice is exerted merely to return thanks to love. Water freezes only in stagnation; a heart never languishes but in constancy. There is but one mortal on earth, whom it is possible to love always. Let him change, let him enjoy the advantage of making a thousand hearts happy; all prevent his wishes, or pursue him. They adore him in their own arms; they love him even in the arms of another. Let him give himself up to our desires, or withdraw himself from them, still he will find love wherever he goes; wherever he goes will he leave the print of love on his footsteps.'

Elmira was no longer able to dissemble her displeasure and grief. She gets up and retires; the sultan does not recal her, and while she is over-

whelming herself with tears, repeating a thousand times, 'Ah! the ungrateful, ah! the perfidious man!' Soliman, charmed with his divine songstress, prepares to realise with her some of those pictures which she had drawn so much to the life. The next morning the unhappy Elmira wrote a billet filled with reproach and tenderness, in which she puts him in mind of the promise he had made her. 'That is true,' said the sultan: 'let us send her back to her country, loaden with marks of my favour. This poor girl loves me dearly, and I am to blame on her account.'

The first moments of his love for Delia were no more than an intoxication; but as soon as he had time for reflection, he perceived that she was more petulant than sensible, more greedy of pleasure than flattered in administering it; in a word, fitter than himself to have a seraglio at command. To feed his illusion, he sometimes invited Delia, that he might hear that voice which had enchanted him; but that voice was no longer the same. The impression made by it became every day weaker and weaker by habitude: and it was now no more than a slight emotion, when an unforeseen circumstance dissipated it for ever.

The chief officer of the seraglio came to inform the sultan, that it was impossible to manage the untractable vivacity of one of the European slaves; that she made a jest of his prohibitions and menaces; and that she answered him only by cutting railleries and immoderate bursts of laughter. Soliman, who was too great a prince to make a state affair of what merely regarded the regulation of his pleasures, entertained a curiosity of seeing this young madcap. He repaired to her, followed by the eunuch. As soon as she saw Soliman, 'Heaven be praised!' said she; 'here comes a human figure! You are without doubt the sublime sultan, whose slave I have the honour to be. Do me the favour to drive away this old knave, who shocks my very

sight.' The sultan had a good deal of difficulty to refrain laughing at this beginning. 'Roxalana,' said he to her (for so she was called), 'show some respect, if you please, to the minister of my pleasures: you are yet a stranger to the manners of the seraglio; till they can instruct you in them, contain yourself, and obey.'—'A fine compliment,' said Roxalana. '*Obey!* Is that your Turkish gallantry? Sure you must be mightily beloved, if it is in this strain you begin your addresses to the ladies! *Respect the minister of my pleasures!* You have your pleasures, then? and, good heaven, what pleasures, if they resemble their minister! an old amphibious monster, who keeps us here penned in, like sheep in a fold, and who prowls round with his frightful eyes always ready to devour us! See here the confidant of your pleasures, and the guardian of our prudence! Give him his due: if you pay him to make yourself hated, he does not cheat you of any of his wages. We cannot take a step but he growls. He forbids us even to walk, and to receive or pay visits. In a short time, I suppose, he will weigh out the air to us, and give us light by the yard. If you had seen him rave last night, because he found me in these solitary gardens!—Did you order him to forbid our going into them? Are you afraid that it should rain men? And if there should fall a few from the clouds, what a misfortune! Heaven owes us this miracle.'

While Roxalana spoke thus, the sultan examined, with surprise, the fire of her looks, and the play of her countenance. 'By Mahomet,' said he to himself, 'here is the prettiest looking romp in all Asia. Such faces as these are made only in Europe.' Roxalana had nothing fine, nothing regular in her features; but taken all together, they had that smart singularity, which touches more than beauty. A speaking look, a mouth fresh and rosy, an arch smile, a nose somewhat turned up, a neat and well-

made shape; all these circumstances gave her giddiness a charm which disconcerted the gravity of Soliman. But the great, in his situation, have the resource of silence: and Soliman, not knowing how to answer her, fairly walked off, concealing his embarrassment under an air of majesty.

The eunuch asked him what orders he would be pleased to give with respect to this saucy slave. 'She is a mere child,' replied the sultan: 'you must pass over some things in her.'

The air, the tone, the figure, the disposition of Roxalana, had excited in the soul of Solimana an anxiety and emotion which sleep was not able to dispel. As soon as he awoke, he ordered the chief of the eunuchs to come to him. 'You seem to me,' said he, 'to be but little in Roxalana's good graces; in order to make your peace, go and tell her I will come and drink tea with her.' On the arrival of the officer, Roxalana's women hastened to wake her. 'What does the ape want with me?' cried she, rubbing her eyes. 'I come,' replied the eunuch, 'from the emperor, to kiss the dust of your feet, and to inform you that he will come and drink tea with the delight of his soul.'—'Get away with your strange speeches! My feet have no dust, and I do not drink tea so early.'

The eunuch retired without replying, and gave an account of his embassy. 'She is in the right,' said the sultan; 'why did you wake her? You do every thing wrong.' As soon as it was broad day with Roxalana, he went thither. 'You are angry with me,' said he: 'they have disturbed your sleep, and I am the innocent cause of it. Come, let us make peace; imitate me: you see that I forget all that you said to me yesterday.'—'You forget it! So much the worse: I said some good things to you. My frankness displeases you, I see plainly; but you will soon grow accustomed to it. And are you not too happy to find a friend in a slave? Yes, a friend, who interests herself in your welfare,

and who would teach you to love. Why have you not made a voyage to my country? It is there that they know love: it is there that it is lively and tender; and why? because it is free. Sentiment is involuntary, and does not come by force. The yoke of marriage amongst us is much lighter than that of slavery; and yet a husband that is beloved is a prodigy. Every thing under the name of duty saddens the soul, blasts the imagination, cools desire, and takes off that edge of self-love which gives all the relish and seasoning to affection. Now, if it be so difficult to love a husband, how much harder is it to love a master, especially if he has not the address to conceal the fetters he puts upon us!'—'And I,' replied the sultan, 'I will forget nothing to soften your servitude; but you ought in your turn . . . . .'—'I *ought!* nothing but what one *ought!* Leave off, I prithee now, these humiliating phrases. They come with a very ill grace from the mouth of a man of gallantry, who has the honour of talking to a pretty woman.'—'But, Roxalana, do you forget who I am, and who you are?'—'Who you are, and who I am? You are powerful, I am pretty; and so we are even.'—'May be so,' replied the sultan, haughtily, 'in your country; but here, Roxalana, I am master, and you a slave.'—'Yes, I know you have purchased me; but the robber who sold me could transfer to you only those rights over me which he had himself, the rights of rapine and violence; in one word, the rights of a robber; and you are too honest a man to think of abusing them. After all, you are my master, because my life is in your hands; but I am no longer your slave, if I know how to despise life; and truly the life one leads here is not worth the fear of losing it.'—'What a frightful notion!' cried the sultan: 'do you take me for a barbarian? No, my dear Roxalana, I would make use of my power only to render this life delightful

to yourself and me.'—'Upon my word,' said Roxalana, 'the prospect is not very promising. These guards, for instance, so black, so disgusting, so ugly, are they the smiles and sports which here accompany love?'—'These guards are not set upon you alone. I have five hundred women, whom our manners and laws oblige me to keep watched.' —'And why five hundred women?' said she to him, with an air of confidence. 'It is a kind of state which the dignity of sultan imposes upon me.' —'But what do you do with them, pray? for you lend them to nobody.'—'Inconstancy,' replied the sultan, 'has introduced this custom. A heart void of love stands in need of variety. Lovers only are constant, and I never was a lover till I saw you. Let not the number of these women give you the shadow of uneasiness; they shall serve only to grace your triumph. You shall see them all eager to please you, and you shall see me attentive to no one but yourself.'—'Indeed,' said Roxalana, with an air of compassion, 'you deserve better luck. It is pity you are not a plain private gentleman in my country; I should then be weak enough to entertain some sort of kindness for you: for at the bottom it is not yourself that I hate, it is that which surrounds you. You are much better than ordinary for a Turk: you have even something of the Frenchman about you; and, without flattery, I have loved some who were not so deserving as yourself.'—'You have loved!' cried Soliman, with horror. 'Oh! not at all; I took care of that! But do you expect one to have kept one's virtue all one's life-time, in order to surrender it to you? Indeed these Turks are pleasant people.' —'And you have not been virtuous? O heavens! what do I hear? I am betrayed; I am lost! Destruction seize the traitors who meant to impose upon me.'—'Forgive them,' said Roxalana; 'the poor creatures are not to blame. The most know-

ing are often deceived. And then, the misfortune is not very great. Why do not you restore me to my liberty, if you think me unworthy of the honours of slavery?'—'Yes, yes, I will restore you to that liberty, of which you have made so good use.' At these words, the sultan retired in a rage, saying to himself, 'I plainly foresaw that this little turned-up nose had made a slip.'

It is impossible to describe the confusion into which this imprudent avowal of Roxalana's had thrown him. Sometimes he had a mind to have her sent away, sometimes that they should shut her up, next that they should bring her to him, and then again that she should be sent away. The great Soliman no longer knows what he says. 'My lord,' remonstrated the eunuch, 'can you fall into despair for a trifle? One girl more, or less: is there any thing so uncommon in her? Besides, who knows whether the confession she has made be not an artifice to get herself sent back to her own country?'—'What say you? how! can it be possible? It is the very thing. He opens my eyes. Women are not used to make such confessions. It is a trick, a stratagem. Ah! the perfidious hussy! Let me dissemble in my turn: I will drive her to the last extremity.—Hark ye! go and tell her .... that I invite her to sup with me this evening. But no, order the songstress to come here: it is better to send her.'

Delia was charged to employ all her art to engage the confidence of Roxalana. As soon as the latter had heard what she had to say, 'What!' said she, 'young and handsome as you are, does he charge you with his messages, and have you the weakness to obey him? Get you gone; you are not worthy to be my countrywoman. Ah! I see plainly that they spoil him, and that I alone must take upon me to teach this Turk how to live. I will send him word that I keep you to sup with

me; I must have him make some atonement for his impertinence.'—'But, madam, he will take it ill.'—'He! I should be glad to see him take any thing ill of me.'—'But he seemed desirous of seeing you alone.'—'Alone! ah! it is not come to that yet; and I shall make him go over a good deal of ground, before we have any thing particular to say to each other.'

The sultan was as much surprised as piqued to learn that they should have a third person. However, he repaired early to Roxalana's. As soon as she saw him coming, she ran to meet him with as easy an air as if they had been upon the best footing in the world together. 'There,' says she, 'is a handsome man come to sup with us!—Do you like him, madam? Confess, Soliman, that I am a good friend. Come, draw near; salute the lady. There! very well. Now, thank me. Softly! I do not like to have people dwell too long on their acknowledgments. Wonderful! I assure you he surprises me. He has had but two lessons, and see how he is improved! I do not despair of making him, one day or other, an absolute Frenchman.'

Do but imagine the astonishment of a sultan, a sultan, the conqueror of Asia, to see himself treated like a schoolboy by a slave of eighteen. During supper, her gaiety and extravagance were inconceivable. The sultan was beside himself with transport. He questioned her concerning the manners of Europe. One picture followed another. Our prejudices, our follies, our humours, were all laid hold of, all represented. Soliman thought himself in Paris. 'The witty rogue!" cried he, 'witty rogue!' From Europe she fell upon Asia. This was much worse; the haughtiness of the men, the weakness of the women, the dulness of their society, the filthy gravity of their amours, nothing escaped her, though she had seen nothing but cursorily. The seraglio had its turn; and Roxalana

began by felicitating the sultan on having been the first to imagine, that he could ensure the virtue of the women by the absolute impotence of the blacks. She was preparing to enlarge upon the honour that this circumstance of his reign would do him in history; but he begged her to spare him: 'Well,' said she, 'I perceive that I take up those moments which Delia could fill up much better. Throw yourself at her feet, to obtain from her one of those airs which, they say, she sings with so much taste and spirit.' Delia did not suffer herself to be entreated. Roxalana appeared charmed: she asked Soliman, in a low voice, for a handkerchief; he gave her one, without the least suspicion of her design. 'Madam,' said she to Delia, presenting it to her, 'I am desired by the sultan to give you the handkerchief; you have well deserved it.'—'Oh; to be sure,' said Soliman, transported with anger; and presenting his hand to the songstress, retired along with her.

As soon as they were alone, 'I confess,' said he to her, 'that this giddy girl confounds me. You see the style in which she treats me. I have not the courage to be angry with her. In short, I am mad, and I do not know what method to take to bring her to reason.'—'My lord,' said Delia, 'I believe I have discovered her temper. Authority can do nothing. You have nothing for it but extreme coldness, or extreme gallantry. Coldness may pique her; but I am afraid we are too far gone for that. She knows that you love her. She will enjoy the pain that this will cost you, and you will come to sooner than she. This method besides is disagreeable and painful; and if one moment's weakness should escape you, you will have all to begin again.'—'Well then,' said the sultan, 'let us try gallantry.'

From that time there was in the seraglio every day a new festival, of which Roxalana was the

object; but she received all this as an homage due to her, without concern or pleasure, but with a cool complaisance. The sultan sometimes asked her, 'How did you like those sports, those concerts, those spectacles?'—'Well enough,' said she; 'but there was something wanting.'—'And what?'—'Men and liberty.'

Soliman was in despair: he had recourse to Delia. 'Upon my word,' said the songstress, 'I know nothing else that can touch her, at least unless glory have a share in it. You receive to-morrow the ambassadors of your allies: cannot I bring her to see this ceremony behind a curtain, which may conceal us from the eyes of your court?'—'And do you think,' said the sultan, 'that this would make any impression on her?'—'I hope so,' said Delia: 'the women of her country love glory.'—'You charm me!' cried Soliman. 'Yes, my dear Delia, I shall owe my happiness to you.'

At his return from this ceremony, which he took care to render as pompous as possible, he repaired to Roxalana. 'Get you gone,' said she to him, 'out of my sight, and never see me more.' The sultan remained motionless and dumb with astonishment. 'Is this then,' pursued she, 'your art of love? Glory and grandeur, the only good things worthy to touch the soul, are reserved for you alone; shame and oblivion, the most insupportable of all evils, are my portion; and you would have me love you! I hate you worse than death.' The sultan would fain have turned this reproach into raillery. 'Nay, but I am serious,' resumed she. 'If my lover had but a hut, I would share his hut with him, and be content. He has a throne; I will share his throne, or he is no lover of mine. If you think me unworthy to reign over the Turks, send me back to my own country, where all the handsome women are sovereigns, and much more absolute than I should be here; for they reign over

hearts.'—'The sovereignty of mine then is not sufficient for you?' said Soliman, with the most tender air in the world. 'No, I desire no heart which has pleasures that I have not. Talk to me no more of your feasts, all mere pastimes for children. I must have embassies.'—'But, Roxalana, you are either mad, or you dream.'—'And what do you find then so extravagant in desiring to reign with you? Am I formed to disgrace a throne? And do you think that I should have displayed less greatness and dignity than yourself in assuring our subjects and allies of our protection?'—'I think,' said the sultan, 'that you would do every thing with grace; but it is not in my power to satisfy your ambition, and I beseech you to think no more of it.'—'I think no more of it! Oh! I promise you I shall think of nothing else, and I will from henceforth dream of nothing but a sceptre, a crown, an embassy.' She kept her word. The next morning she had already contrived the design of her diadem; and had already settled every thing, except the colour of the riband which was to tie it. She ordered rich stuffs to be brought her for her habits of ceremony; and as soon as the sultan appeared, she asked his opinion on the choice. He exerted all his endeavours to divert her from this idea; but contradiction plunged her into the deepest melancholy; and to draw her out of it again, he was obliged to flatter her illusion. Then she displayed the most brilliant gaiety. He seized these moments to talk to her of love; but, without listening, she talked to him of politics. All her answers to the harangues of the deputies, on her accession to the crown, were already prepared. She had even formed projects of regulations for the territories of the grand seignior. She would make them plant vines and build opera-houses; suppress the eunuchs, because they were good for nothing; shut up the jealous, because they disturbed society; and banish

all self-interested persons, because sooner or later they became rogues. The sultan amused himself for some time with these follies; nevertheless he still burnt with the most violent love, without any hope of being happy. On the least suspicion of violence she became furious, and was ready to kill herself. On the other hand, Soliman found not the ambition of Roxalana so very foolish: 'For, in short,' said he, 'is it not cruel to be alone deprived of the happiness of associating to my fortune a woman whom I esteem and love? All my subjects may have a lawful wife: an absurd law forbids marriage to me alone.' Thus spoke love, but policy put him to silence. He took the resolution of confiding to Roxalana the reasons which restrained him. 'I would make it,' said he, 'my happiness to leave nothing wanting to yours: but our manners'—'Idle stories!' 'Our laws'—'Old songs!' 'The priests'—'What care they?' 'The people and the soldiery'—'What is it to them? will they be more wretched when you shall have me for your consort? You have very little love, if you have so little courage!' She prevailed so far, that Soliman was ashamed of being so fearful. He orders the mufti, the visir, the camalcan, the aga of the sea, and the aga of the janissaries, to come to him; and he says to them, 'I have carried, as far as I was able, the glory of the crescent; I have established the power and peace of my empire; and I desire nothing, by way of recompense for my labours, but to enjoy with the good-will of my subjects a blessing which they all enjoy. I know not what law, but it is one that is not derived down to us from the prophet, forbids the sultans the sweets of the marriage bed: thence I perceive myself reduced to the condition of slaves, whom I despise; and I have resolved to marry a woman whom I adore. Prepare my people then for this marriage. If they approve it, I receive their ap-

probation as a mark of their gratitude; but if they dare to murmur at it, tell them that I will have it so.' The assembly received the sultan's orders with a respectful silence, and the people followed their example.

Soliman, transported with joy and love, went to fetch Roxalana, in order to lead her to the mosque; and said to himself in a low voice, as he was conducting her thither, 'Is it possible that a little turned-up nose should overturn the laws of an empire?'

THE SCRUPLE;

OR,

LOVE DISSATISFIED WITH ITSELF.

'HEAVEN be praised,' said Belisa, on going out of mourning for her husband, 'I have now fulfilled a grievous and painful piece of duty! It was time it should be over. To see one's-self delivered up at the age of sixteen to a man whom we know nothing of; to pass the best days of one's life in dulness, dissimulation, and servitude; to be the slave and victim of a love we inspire, but of which we cannot partake; what a trial for virtue! I have undergone it, and am now discharged. I have nothing to reproach myself with; for though I did not love my husband, I pretended to love him, and that is much more heroic. I was faithful to him, notwithstanding his jealousy: in short, I have *mourned* for him. This, I think, is carrying goodness of heart as far as it can go. At length restored to myself, I depend on nothing but my own will, and it is only from to-day that I begin to live. Ah! how my heart would take fire, if any one should succeed so far as to please me! But let me consider well before I engage this heart of mine, and let me not, if possible, run the risk either of ceasing to love, or of ceasing to be loved. Cease to be loved! That, I believe, is a difficult matter,' resumed she, consulting at the same time her looking-glass: 'but to cease to love is still worse. How could one for any considerable time feign a passion one did not feel? I should never be able to do it. To leave a man after we have taken to him is a piece of effrontery beyond me; and then

complaints, despair, the noise of a rupture, all that is frightful. Let me love, since Heaven has given me a sensible heart; but let me love my whole life long, and not flatter myself with those transient likings, those caprices which are so often taken for love. I have time to choose and try myself: the only thing to be done to avoid all surprise, is to form a distinct and exact notion of love. I have read that love is a passion, which of two souls makes but one, which pierces them at the same time, and fills them one with the other, which detaches them from every thing, supplies the want of every thing, and makes their mutual happiness their only care and desire. Such, without doubt, is love; and, according to this idea of it, it will be very easy for me to distinguish in myself, and in others, the illusion from the reality.'

Her first experiment was made on a young magistrate, with whom the disposition of her late husband's effects gave her some connexion. The president de S———, with an agreeable figure, a cultivated understanding, a sweet and sensible temper, was simple in his dress, easy in his manner, and modest in his conversation. He valued himself neither on being a connoisseur in equipages, nor fineries. He talked not of his horses to the women, nor of his intrigues to the men. He had all the talents becoming his place without ostentation, and all the agreeable qualities of a man of the world without being a coxcomb. He was the same at court and in company: not that he passed decrees at an entertainment, or rallied when he heard the causes; but as he had not the least affectation, he was always without disguise.

Belisa was touched with such uncommon merit. He had gained her confidence; he obtained her friendship, and under that name the heart goes a great way. The affairs of Belisa's husband being settled, 'May I be permitted,' said the president one day to the widow, 'to ask you one question in

confidence? Do you propose to remain free, or shall the sacrifice of your liberty make one man more happy?'—'No, sir,' said she, 'I have too much delicacy ever to make it any man's duty to live only for me.'—'That duty would be a very pleasing one,' replied the gallant magistrate, 'and I greatly fear, that without your consent, more than one lover will impose it upon himself.'—'So much the better,' said Belisa; 'let them love me without being obliged to it: it is the most pleasing of all homages.'—'Yet, madam, I cannot suspect you of being a coquette.'—'Oh! you would do me great injustice if you did; for I abominate coquetry.'—'But to desire to be loved without loving again?'—'And who, sir, has told you that I shall not love?' Such resolutions are not taken at my age. I would neither constrain, nor be constrained: that is all.'—'Very well: you desire then that the engagement should cease with inclination?'—'I desire that both the one and the other should be eternal, and for that reason I would avoid even the shadow of constraint. I feel myself capable of loving all my life long in liberty; but to tell you the truth, I would not promise to love two days in slavery.'

The president saw plainly that he must humour her delicacy, and content himself with being on the footing of a friend. He had the modesty to bring himself to that, and from thenceforward every little tenderness of love was practised in order to touch her. He succeeded. I shall not mention the degrees by which Belisa's sensibility was every day more and more affected; let it suffice, that she was now come to that pass, when prudence, in equipoise with love, waits only one slight effort to turn the scale. They were at this point, and were *tête-à-tête*. The president's eyes, inflamed with love, devoured the charms of Belisa; he pressed her hand tenderly. Belisa trembling, hardly breathed. The president solicited her with the impassioned eloquence of

desire. 'Ah! president,' said she to him at last, 'could you be capable of deceiving me?' At these words the last sigh of modesty seemed to have escaped her lips. 'No, madam,' said he, 'it is my heart, it is Love himself who has just spoken by my mouth, and may I die at your feet if——' As he fell at Belisa's feet, his knee came upon one of the paws of *Shock*, the young widow's favourite lap-dog. *Shock* set up an howl. 'Lord, sir, how awkward you are!' cried Belisa with anger. The president coloured, and was disconcerted. He took *Shock* to his bosom, kissed the injured paw, asked his pardon a thousand times, and entreated him to solicit his forgiveness. *Shock*, recovered of his pain, returned the president's caresses. 'You see, madam, he has good nature: he forgives me; it is a fine example for you.' Belisa made no reply. She was fallen into a profound reverie, and a cold gravity. He wanted at first to interpret her gravity as a little pouting, and threw himself again at Belisa's feet in order to appease her. 'Pray, sir, get up,' said she to him; 'these freedoms displease me, and I do not know that I have given any room for them.'

Imagine the president's astonishment. He was confounded for two whole minutes, without being able to bring out a word. 'What! madam,' said he to her at last, 'can it be possible that so trivial an accident has drawn your anger upon me?'—'Not at all, sir; but I may without anger take it ill that any one should throw himself at my feet: it is a situation that suits only happy lovers, and I esteem you too much to suspect your having dared to form any such pretensions.'—'I do not see, madam,' replied the president with emotion, 'why a hope founded on love should render me less worthy of esteem; but may I presume to ask you, since love is a crime in your eyes, what is the nature of the sentiment you have expressed towards me?'—Friendship, sir, friendship; and I desire you

very seriously to keep to that.'—'I ask your pardon, madam; I should have sworn that it had been somewhat else: I see plainly that I was mistaken.' —'That may be, sir; many others are mistaken, as well as yourself.' The president could no longer sustain the shock of so strange an instance of caprice. He went away in despair, and was not recalled.

As soon as Belisa found herself alone, 'Was not I going to be guilty of a fine piece of folly?' said she with indignation. 'I have seen the moment when my weakness was going to yield to a man whom I did not love. They may well say that we know nothing less than ourselves. I could have sworn that I adored him, that there was nothing which I was not disposed to sacrifice to him: and such thing: he happens, without intending it, to hurt my little dog, and this violent love immediately gives place to anger. A dog touches me more than he, and without a moment's hesitation I take the part of this little animal against the man in the world whom I thought I loved best. A very lively passion indeed; mighty solid and tender! See how we take ideas for sentiments! The brain is heated, and we fancy the heart inflamed: we proceed to all manner of follies; the illusion ceases, and disgust succeeds: we must tire ourselves with constancy without love, or be inconstant with indecency. O! my dear *Shock*, what do I not owe you? It is you that have undeceived me. But for you I should perhaps have been at this moment overwhelmed with confusion, and torn with remorse.'

Whether Belisa did or did not love the president, (for questions of this nature turn merely on the equivocation of terms) it is certain, that on the strength of saying to herself that she did not love him, she succeeded so far as to convince herself of it; and a young officer soon confirmed her in her opinion.

Lindor, from being one of the pages, had just

obtained a company of horse. Freshness of youth, impatience of desire, giddiness and levity, which are graces at sixteen, and follies at thirty, rendered agreeable in the eyes of Belisa this young man of quality, who had the honour of belonging to her husband's family. Lindor was extremely fond of himself, and not without reason; he knew that he was well made, and of a charming figure. He said so sometimes; but he laughed so heartily after he had said it, he discovered in laughing so fresh a mouth and such fine teeth, that these simplicities were pardoned at his age. He mingled besides such lofty and noble sentiments with the puerilities of self-love, that all this together was very engaging. He was desirous of having a handsome mistress, and a good war-horse; he would view himself in the glass as he went through the Prussian exercise. He would beg Belisa to lend him the *Sopha* *, and asked her if she had read *Folard's Polybius*. He thought it long till spring, that he might have an elegant suit, in case of a peace, or make a campaign if it should be war. This mixture of frivolousness and heroism is perhaps the most seducing of any thing in the eyes of a woman. A confused presage that this pretty little creature, who trifles at the toilette, who caresses his dear self, who admires his own sweet person, will perhaps in two months' time throw himself in the face of a battery upon a squadron of the enemy, or climb like a grenadier up a mined breach; this presage gives to the gentilities of a fine gentleman an air of the marvellous, which creates admiration and tenderness: but this foppery sits well on none but young gentlemen of the army. A piece of advice, by the way, to pretty fellows of every condition.

Belisa was affected by the simple and airy graces of Lindor. He had conceived a passion for her

* The title of a loose novel.

from the first visit. A young page is in haste to be in love. 'My beautiful cousin,' said he to her one day, (for so he called her on account of their alliance) 'I ask of Heaven but two things; to make my first campaign against the English, and with you.'—'You are a giddy creature,' said she, 'and I advise you to desire neither one nor the other: one will happen perhaps but too soon, and the other will never happen at all!'—'Never happen at all! That is very strong, my sweet cousin. But I expected this answer: so it does not discourage me. Come, I will lay you a wager, that before my second campaign you will cease to be cruel. Now that I have nothing to plead for me but my age and figure, you treat me like a child; but when you shall have heard it said he was at such an action, his regiment charged on such an occasion, he distinguished himself, he took a post, he has run a thousand risks; then your little heart will go pit-a-pat with fear and pleasure, and perhaps with love; who knows? If I were wounded, for example! Oh! that is very moving! For my part, if I were a woman, I should wish that my lover had been wounded in the wars. I would kiss his scars: I should have infinite pleasure in counting them. My beautiful cousin, I shall show you mine. You will never be able to hold out.'—'Go, you young fool, do your duty like a gallant man, and do not shock me with presages that make me tremble.'—'See now if I have not spoke truth! I make you tremble beforehand. Ah! if the idea alone affects you, what will the reality? Courage, my pretty cousin, you may trust yourself to me: will not you give me something in advance upon account of the laurels that I am going to gather?'

Such fooleries passed between them every day. Belisa, who pretended to laugh at them, was not the less sensibly touched; but that vivacity, which made so great an impression upon her heart, prevented Lindor from perceiving it. He was neither

knowing enough, nor attentive enough, to observe the gradations of sentiment, and to draw his advantages from them. Not but he was as enterprising as politeness requires; but a look intimidated him, and the fear of displeasing influenced him as much as his impatience to be happy. Thus two months passed away in slight attempts, without any decisive success. However, their mutual passion grew more and more animated; and feeble as Belisa's resistance was, she was tired of it herself, when the signal for war gave the alarm to their loves.

At this terrible signal all engagements are suspended: one flies away without waiting an answer to a most gallant billet; another fails in an assignation that would have crowned all his wishes: a total revolution in the whole empire of pleasures!

Lindor had scarce time to take leave of Belisa. She had now reproached herself a hundred times for her imaginary cruelties. 'This poor youth,' said she, 'loves me with all his soul: nothing can be more natural or tender than the expression of his sentiments. His figure is a model for a painter or statuary. He is beautiful as the day; giddy indeed: but who is not so at his age? And he has an excellent heart. He has nothing to do but to amuse himself: he would find few cruel: yet he sees only me, he breathes only for me, and I treat him with disdain. I wonder how he bears it. I confess that if I were in his place I should soon leave this rigid Belisa to stupefy herself with her virtue; for, in short, though prudery is well enough sometimes, yet to be always acting the prudish part!' As she was making these reflections, the news arrived that the negotiations of peace were broken off, and that the officers had orders to rejoin their corps without a moment's delay. At this news all her blood froze in her veins: 'He is going,' cried she, her heart struck and penetrated: 'he is going to fight—going to die perhaps, and I shall

never see him more!' Lindor arrives in his uniform. 'I am come to bid you adieu, my sweet cousin; I am going; going to face the enemy. Half of my wish is fulfilled; and I hope that at my return you will fulfil the other half. I love you dearly, my sweet cousin! Do you sometimes remember your little cousin; he will return your faithful servant, he gives you his word. If he is slain, indeed, he will not return; but in that case his ring and watch shall be sent you. You see here this little dog in enamel. In it you will retrace my image, my fidelity, my tenderness, and you will sometimes kiss it' In pronouncing these last words he smiled tenderly, and his eyes were bedewed with tears. Belisa, who was no longer able to retain her own, said to him with the most sorrowful air in the world, 'You quit me very gaily, Lindor: you say you love me; are these the adieus of a lover? I thought it had been dreadful to banish one's self from what one loves. But it is not now the time to reproach you; come, embrace me.' Lindor, transported, made use of this permission even to licentiousness, and Belisa was not offended. 'And when are you to depart?' said she. 'Immediately. —' Immediately! What! do not you sup with me?' —' Impossible.'—' I had a thousand things to say to you.'—' Say them quickly then; my horses wait.' —' You are very cruel to refuse me one evening!' —' Ah! my pretty cousin, I would give you my life; but my honour is at stake: my hours are numbered; I must be there to a minute. Think, if there should be an action and I not there; I should be undone: your little cousin would be unworthy of you. Suffer me to deserve you.'

Belisa embraced him anew, bathing him at the same time with her tears. 'Go,' said she, 'I should be distracted if I drew the least reproach upon you; your honour is as dear to me as my own. Be wise, expose yourself only just as much as duty requires, and return such as I now see you.

You do not give me time to say more; but we will write to each other. Adieu.'—'Adieu, my sweet cousin!'—'Adieu, adieu, my dear boy!'

It is thus that among us gallantry is the soul of honour, as honour is the soul of our armies. Our ladies have no occasion to meet our warriors more than half way, in order to make them fight; but the contempt with which they treat a poltroon, and the favour they show to men of courage, render their lovers intrepid.

Belisa passed the night in the most profound sorrow, and bathed her bed with her tears. The day following she wrote to Lindor: all that a tender and delicate soul could inspire, of the most touching nature, was expressed in her letter. O ye, who are so ill educated, who is it that teaches you to write so well? Does nature take pleasure to humble us by giving you your revenge?

Lindor in his answer, which was full of fire and irregularity, expressed by turns the two passions of his soul, military ardour and love. Belisa's impatience disturbed her rest till she received this answer. Their correspondence was established, and continued without interruption for half the campaign; and the last letter they wrote was always the warmest; the last that was expected always the most desired. Lindor, to his misfortune, had a suspicious confidant. 'You are bewitched,' said this bosom friend to him, 'with this woman's being so fond of you. Ah, if you did but know the bottom of all this! I know women. Will you make one proof of your mistress? Write her word that you have lost an eye; I will lay a wager she will advise you to take patience, and forget her.' Lindor, quite certain of his triumph, consented to make the trial; and, as he knew not how to lie, his friend dictated the letter. Belisa was distracted: the image of Lindor presented itself to her imagination, but with one eye wanting. That large black patch made it impossible to know him. 'What

pity,' said she, sighing. 'His two eyes were so brilliant! Mine met them with so much pleasure! Love had painted himself there with so many charms! Yet he is only the more interesting to my heart on this account, and I ought to love him the more. He must be disconsolate; and dreads nothing so much as the appearing less amiable to me. Let me write to him, to encourage, to comfort him, if it be possible.' This was the first time that Belisa was ever obliged to say to herself, *Let me write to him!* Her letter was cold in spite of herself: she perceived it, tore it, and writ it over anew. The expressions were strong enough; but the turn of them was forced, and the style laboured. That black patch, instead of a fine eye, clouded her imagination, and chilled her conceptions. 'Ah! let me flatter myself no longer,' said she, tearing her letter a second time: 'this poor youth is no longer beloved; an eye lost turns my soul topsy-turvy. I wanted to play the heroine; and I am but a weak woman: let me not affect sentiments above my character. Lindor does not deserve to be deceived: he reckons upon a generous and sensible soul: but if I cannot love him I ought at least to undeceive him: his lying under a mistake will give me pain. I am disconsolate,' writ she to him, 'and am much more to be lamented than yourself: you have lost only a charm, but I am going to lose your esteem, as I have already lost my own. I thought myself worthy to love you, and to be beloved by you; I am no longer so: my heart flattered itself with being superior to events; a single accident has changed me. Console yourself, sir! you will always please any reasonable woman; and after the humiliating confession I have now made you, you have no longer any occasion to regret me.'

Lindor was distracted on reading this billet. The *sir* especially appeared to him an atrocious injury. '*Sir!*' cried he. 'Ah! the perfidious woman!

Her little cousin, *sir!* This *sir* is for the man with one eye.' He went to find out his friend. 'I told you so,' said the confidant: 'Now is the time to take your revenge; unless you had rather wait the end of the campaign, in order to give your heroine the pleasure of a surprise.'—'No, I will put her to confusion this very day,' replied the unfortunate Lindor. He then wrote to her that he was quite transported that he had tried her; that *sir* had still got his two eyes, but that those eyes would never view her more but as the most ungrateful of women. Belisa was confounded, and from that instant resolved to renounce the world, and bury herself in the country. 'Let me go and vegetate,' said she; 'I am fit for nothing else.'

In her country neighbourhood was a kind of philosopher, in the flower of his age, who, after having enjoyed every thing for six months of the year in town, was come for the other six months to enjoy himself in voluptuous solitude. He paid his compliments to Belisa. 'You have,' said she to him, 'the reputation of wisdom; what is your plan of life?'—'Plan, madam! I never had any,' replied the Count de P——. 'I do every thing that can amuse me, I seek after every thing that I love, and carefully avoid every thing that makes me dull, or displeases me.'—'Do you live alone, or do you see company?'—'I see our shepherd sometimes, whom I teach morality; I converse with husbandmen, who are better instructed than all our *literati*; I give a ball to some of the prettiest young villagers in the world; I make lotteries for them of laces and ribands, and I marry off the most amorous.'—'What!' said Belisa with astonishment, 'do these folks know what love is?'—'Better than we do, madam; a hundred times better than we do. They love like turtles: they give me an appetite for it.'—'You will confess, however, that they love without delicacy.'—'Alas! madam, delicacy is a refinement of art; they have instinct from na-

ture, and that instinct renders them happy. They talk of love in town, but it is practised only in the country. They have in sentiment what we have in imagination. I have tried, like other people, to love and be loved in the world; caprice and convenience, order and disorder, every thing. A connexion is nothing more than a rencounter: here inclination makes the choice: you will see in the sports that I give them how their simple and tender hearts seek each other by turns.'—'You give me,' said Belisa, 'a picture of the country beyond expectation. They say these people are so much to be lamented!'—'They were so, madam, some years ago; but I have found out the secret of rendering their condition more agreeable.'—'Oh! you shall tell me your secret,' interrupted Belisa, briskly; 'I want to make use of it.'—'It is your own fault if you do not. It is this: I have an income of forty thousand livres a year; of this I spend ten or twelve at Paris in the two seasons that I pass there; eight or ten at my house in the country; and by this management I have twenty thousand livres to throw away on exchanges.'—'What exchanges?'—'I have lands well cultivated, meadows well watered, orchards well fenced, and well planted.'—'What then?'—'What then! Lucas, Blaise, Nicolas, my neighbours and my good friends, have grounds lying fallow, or poor; they have not wherewith to cultivate them: I swap mine with them for theirs; and the same extent of land, which hardly maintained them, after two crops makes them rich. The ground which was barren under their hands becomes fertile in mine. I choose the seed for it, the plant, the manure, the husbandry that suits it, and as soon as it is in good condition I bethink me of some new exchange. These are my amusements.'—'Charming!' cried Belisa; 'you understand agriculture, then?'—'A little, madam; and I instruct myself in it: I oppose the theory of the learned to the experience of farmers; I endeavour to cor-

fect what I see defective in the speculations of the one, and in the practice of the other: and the study is amusing.'—'Oh! I believe it, and I would fain give into it. Why, you ought to be adored in these parts; these poor labourers ought to consider you as their father.'—'Yes, madam, we have a great affection for each other.'—'I am very happy, my lord, that chance has given me such a neighbour! Let us see each other often, I entreat of you: I want to pursue your labours, to follow your method, and become your rival in the hearts of these good people.'—'You cannot have, madam, any rivals of either sex wherever it is your desire to please, and even where it is not.'

Such was their first interview; and from this moment see Belisa a villager, entirely taken up with agriculture, conversing with farmers, and reading nothing but the *Complete System of Agriculture*. The count invited her to one of his holiday feasts, and presented her to the peasants as a new benefactress, or rather as their sovereign. She was a witness of the love and respect they had for him. Sentiments of this kind are catching: they are so natural and so tender! it is the highest of all encomiums, and Belisa was touched with them even to jealousy; but how distant was this jealousy from hatred! 'It must be confessed,' said she, 'that they have great reason to love him. Exclusive of his good actions, nobody in the world is more amiable.'

From this time the most intimate, and in appearance the most philosophical connexion was established between them. Their conversation turned only on natural studies, on the means of renovating this old mother earth, who exhausts herself for the sake of her children. Botany pointed out to them the plants salutary to the flocks and herds, and those that were hurtful; mechanics afforded them the powers to raise water, at a small expense, to the top of dry hills, and to soften the fatigues of animals destined to labour; natural history taught them

how to calculate the economical inconveniences and advantages in the choice of these animals; practice confirmed or corrected their observations; and they made their experiments in small, in order to render them less expensive. The holiday came round, and their sports suspended their studies.

Belisa and the philosopher mingled in the dances of the villagers. Belisa perceived with surprise that not one of them was taken up in admiring her. 'You will now,' said she to her friend, 'suspect me of a very strange piece of coquetry; but I will not dissemble with you. I have been told a hundred times that I was handsome; I have likewise, much beyond these peasants, the advantage of dress; yet I do not see, in the eyes of the young country fellows, any trace of emotion at the sight of me. They think only of their companions; they have no souls but for them.'—'Nothing is more natural, madam,' said the count. 'Desire never comes without some ray of hope; and these poor people find you no otherwise beautiful, than as they do the stars and the flowers.'—'You surprise me,' said Belisa: 'is it hope that renders us sensible?'—'No: but it directs our sensibility.'—'We never love then but with the hope of pleasing?'—'No, to be sure, madam; or else who could help loving you?'—'A philosopher then has gallantry?' replied Belisa, with a smile.—'I speak the truth, madam, though no philosopher; but if I deserved that name, I should only have the more sensibility. A true philosopher is a man, and glories in being so. Wisdom never contradicts nature, but when nature is in the wrong.' Belisa blushed, the count was confounded, and they sat some time, with their eyes fixed on the ground, without daring to break silence. The count endeavoured to renew the conversation on the beauties of the country; but their discourse was confused, broken, and without continuation: they no longer knew what they said, and still less what they were going to say. They

parted at last, she thoughtful, and he lost; and both afraid that they had said too much.

The youth of the neighbouring villages assembled the next day, in order to give them a feast; its sprightliness composed all its ornament. Belisa was transported at it; but the catastrophe surprised her. The master of the feast had made songs in praise of her and the count, and the couplets closed with saying, that Belisa was the elm, and the count the ivy. The count knew not whether he should silence them, or take the matter in jest; but Belisa was offended at it. 'Pardon them, madam,' said the count to her, as he reconducted her home; 'these good people speak what they think, and know no better. I should have put them to silence, but that I had not the courage to make them unhappy.' Belisa made him no answer, and he retired overwhelmed with sorrow for the impression this innocent sport had made on her.

'How unhappy am I!' said Belisa, after the departure of the count. 'See, here again is a man I am going to love. It is so clear, that even these peasants perceive it: it will be with him, as with all others, a slight flame, a spark. No, I will see him no more: it is shameful to be desirous of inspiring a passion, when we are not susceptible of it ourselves. The count would deliver himself up to me without reserve, and with the greatest confidence: I should make a very respectable man unhappy, if I were to break with him.' The next day he sent to know if she was to be seen. 'What shall I do? If I refuse him to-day, I must see him to-morrow; if I persist in not seeing him more, what will he think of this change? What has he done that can have displeased me? Shall I leave him to think that I mistrust him or myself? After all, what if he should assure me that he loves me? And if he should love am I obliged to love him? I will bring him to reason, I will give him a sketch

of my character, he will esteem me the more for it: I must see him.' The count comes.

'I am going to surprise you,' said she to him; 'I have been on the point of breaking with you.'—'With me, madam! why? What is my crime?'—'Being amiable and dangerous. I declare to you that I came here in quest of repose; that I fear nothing so much as love; that I am not formed for a solid engagement; that I have the lightest, the most inconstant soul in the world; that I despise transitory likings; and that I have not a sufficient fund of sensibility to entertain a durable passion. This is my character: I give you warning. I can answer for myself with respect to friendship; but as to love, you must not depend on me; and that I may have no cause to reproach myself, I would neither inspire it, nor be inspired with it myself.'—'Your sincerity encourages mine,' replied the count, 'you are now going to know me in my turn. I have conceived for you, without the least suspicion or intention, a love the most tender and violent: it is the happiest thing that could have happened to me, and I resign myself up to it with all my heart. Say what you please to me. You think yourself light and inconstant; I think I know the character of your soul better than yourself.'—'No, sir, I have tried myself, and now you shall judge.' She told him the story of the president, and that of the young page. 'You loved them, madam; you loved them: you discourage yourself without cause. Your anger against the president was without consequence. The first emotion is always for the dog, but the second for the lover; so nature has ordered it. As to the cooling of your love towards the page, that would not have been more durable. An eye lost always produces this effect; but by degrees we become accustomed to it. As to the duration of a passion, I must be ingenuous with you. What a madman is he who

requires impossibilities! I ardently desire to please you; I shall make it the happiness of my life: but if your inclination should happen to grow faint, it would be a misfortune, but no crime. What! because there is no pleasure in life without its alloy, must we deprive ourselves of every thing, renounce every thing? No, madam, we must make choice of what is good, and pardon both in ourselves, and others, what is not quite so well, or what is really evil. We lead an easy, quiet life here; nothing but love is wanting to embellish it: let us make the experiment. If love should vanish, friendship still remains; and as vanity has no share in it, the friendship that survives love is the sweeter, the more intimate and more tender.'—'Really, sir,' said she, 'this is strange philosophy.'—'Simple and natural, madam! I could make romances as well as another; but life is not a romance: our principles, as well as sentiments, ought to be founded in nature. Nothing is easier than to imagine prodigies of love; but all those heroes exist only in the brains of authors: they say what they please; let us do what we can. It is a misfortune, without doubt, to cease to please; it is a greater to cease to love; but the height of misery is to pass one's life in fear and self constraint. Confide in yourself, madam, and deign to confide in me. It is cruel enough not to be able to love always, without dooming one's self never to love at all. Let us imitate our villagers: they do not examine whether they shall love long; it is sufficient for them to feel that they love. I surprise you! You have been brought up in the region of chimeras. Believe me, you have a good disposition: return to truth, suffer yourself to be guided by Nature: she will conduct you much better than art, which loses itself in the void, and reduces sentiment to nothing by means of analysing it.'

If Belisa was not persuaded, she was much less confirmed in her first resolution; and from the

moment that reason wavers, it is easy to overturn it. Belisa submitted without difficulty, and never did mutual love render two hearts more happy! Resigned with the utmost freedom one to the other, they forgot the world, they forgot themselves. All the faculties of their souls united in one, formed a mere vortex of fire, of which love was the centre, and pleasure the fuel.

This first ardour abated, and Belisa was alarmed; but the count confirmed her. They return to their rural amusements. Belisa found that nature was embellished: that the heavens were more serene, and the country more delightful; the sports of the villagers pleased her more than before: they recalled a delicious remembrance. Their labours became more interesting. 'My lover,' said she to herself, 'is the god who encourages them: his humanity, his generosity, are the rivulets which fertilize these fields.' She loved to converse with the husbandmen on the benefits showered upon them by this mortal, whom they called their father. Love brought home to herself all the good they said of him. Thus she passed the whole summer in loving, in admiring him, in seeing him make others happy, and in making herself happy also.

Belisa had proposed to the count to pass the winter out of town, and he had answered her with a smile, 'With all my heart.' But as soon as the country began to grow bare, that walking was impracticable, that the days became rainy, the mornings cold, and the evenings long, Belisa perceived with bitterness, that weariness took possession of her soul, and that she wanted to revisit Paris. She confessed it with her usual frankness. 'I told you so beforehand; you would not believe me: the event but too well justifies the ill opinion I had of myself.'—'What event?'—'Ah! my dear count, since I must tell you, I grow tired: I love you no longer.'—'You grow tired; that is very possible,' replied the count with a smile; 'but you do not

love me the less: it is the country that you love no longer.'—'Alas, sir! why do you flatter me? All places, all seasons, are agreeable with those we love.'—'Yes, in romances, I have told you so already; but not in nature.'—'It is in vain for you to say so,' insisted Belisa; 'I know full well, that two months ago I could have been happy with you in a desert.'—'Without doubt, madam; such is the intoxication of a growing passion: but this first flame lasts only for a time. Love, when made happy, grows calm and moderate. The soul, from that instant, less agitated, begins to become sensible to impressions from without: we are no longer alone in the world: we begin to feel the necessity of dissipation and amusement.'—'Ah, sir! to what do you reduce love?'—'To truth, my dear Belisa.'—'To nothing, my dear count; to nothing. You cease to be my only happiness, I have therefore ceased to love you.'—'No, my soul's idol, no; I have not lost your heart, and I shall be always dear to you.'—'Always dear; yes, to be sure; but how?'—'As I would wish to be.'—'Alas! I perceive my own injustice too clearly to conceal it from myself.'—'No, madam, you are not unjust. You love me sufficiently: I am content, and would not be loved more. Will you be more difficult than I?'—'Yes, sir, I shall never forgive myself the having been able to grow tired of the most amiable man in the world.'—'And I, madam, and I, who have nothing to boast of, am tired also at times of the most adorable of all women, and I forgive myself for it.'—'What, sir, are you ever tired of me?'—'Even of you. Nevertheless, I love you more than my life. Are you satisfied now?'—'Come, sir, let us return to Paris!'—'Yes, madam, with all my heart; but remember, that the month of May shall find us in the country again.'—'I don't believe it.'—'I assure you it will, and more fond than ever.'

Belisa, on her return to town, began to give herself up to all the amusements which the winter occasions, with an avidity which she thought insatiable. The count, on his side, abandoned himself to the torrent of the world, but with less eagerness. By degrees Belisa's ardour abated. The suppers appeared long to her: she grew tired at the play. The count took care to see her seldom; his visits were short, and he chose those hours when she was surrounded by a multitude of adorers: she asked him one day, in a very low voice, 'What do you think of Paris?'—'Every thing amuses, nothing attaches me.'—'Why do not you come and sup with me?'—'You have seen me so often, madam! I am discreet; the world has its turn, and I shall have mine.'—'You are still persuaded, then, that I love you?'—'I never talk of love in town. What think you, madam, of the new opera?' pursued he aloud, and the conversation became general.

Belisa was always comparing the count with every thing that appeared best, and the comparison always turned out in his favour. 'Nobody,' said she, 'has that candour, that simplicity, that evenness of character; nobody has that goodness of soul and elevation of sentiment. When I recollect our conversation, all our young people seem nothing more than well-taught parrots. He may well doubt that one can cease to love him after having known him. But no; it is not the good opinion he has of himself, it is the good opinion he has of me, that gives him this confidence. How happy should I be were it well founded.'

Such were Belisa's reflections; and the more she perceived her inclination for him revive, the more she was at ease with herself. In short, the desire of seeing him again became so strong, that she could not resist writing to him. He repaired to her; and accosting her with a smile, 'What,

madam,' said he, 'a *tête-à-tête!* I shall create a thousand jealousies.'—'Nobody, sir,' said Belisa, 'has a right to be so; and you know that I have only friends: but you, are not you afraid of disturbing some new conquest?'—'I never made but one in my life,' replied the count; 'she expects me in the country, and I shall go this spring to see her.'—'She would be to be pitied if she were in town: you are so taken up here, that she would run the hazard of being neglected.'—'She would amuse herself, madam, and think nothing of me.'—'No more of this beating about the bush,' resumed she: 'why do I see you so seldom, and for so short a time?'—'To let you enjoy at full liberty all the pleasures of your youth.'—'You can never give me too much of your company, sir; my house is yours; look upon it as such; it will flatter me: I request it, and I have acquired a right to exact it.'—'No, madam, exact nothing; I should despair if I displeased you: but permit me not to see you again till the summer.' This obstinacy piqued her. 'Go, sir,' said she to him with anger, 'go seek pleasures in which I have no part. I have merited your inconstancy.' From that day she had not a moment's ease: she informed herself of all his proceedings: she sought and followed him with her eyes in the public walks and at the theatres: the women whom he saw became odious to her; she never ceased questioning his friends. The winter appeared intolerably long. Though it was but the beginning of March, some fine days happening, 'I must,' said she, 'confound him, and justify myself. I have been wrong hitherto, he has that advantage over me; but to-morrow he shall have it no longer.' She sent to request him to come to her; every thing was ready for their departure. The count arrives. 'Your hand,' said Belisa, 'to help me into my coach.'—'Where are we going, then?' said he. 'To grow tired of ourselves in the

country.' The count was transported with joy at these words. Belisa, at the movement of the hand that supported her, perceived the ecstacy and emotion herself had given birth to. 'O my dear count!' said she to him, pressing that hand which trembled beneath hers, 'what do I not owe you? You have taught me to love; you have convinced me that I was capable of it; and in clearing up my doubts, with respect to my own sentiments, you have done me the most pleasing violence: you have forced me to think well of myself, and to believe myself worthy of you. My love is satisfied. I have no longer any SCRUPLE, and I am happy.'

THE FOUR PHIALS;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF ALCIDONIS OF MEGARA.

I REGRET the loss of fairyism. It was to lively imaginations a source of innocent pleasures, and the handsomest way in the world of forming agreeable dreams. The climates of the East were formerly peopled with genii and fairies. The Greeks considered them as mediating beings between men and gods: witness the familiar dæmon of Socrates: witness the fairy which protected Alcidonis, as I am going to relate.

The fairy Galante had taken Alcidonis under her protection, even before his coming into the world. She presided at his birth, and endowed him with the gift of pleasing, without any determined inclination to love. His youth was but the unfolding of those talents and graces, which he had received as his lot.

He had passed his fifteenth year, when his father, one of the richest and most honourable citizens of Megara, on his sending him to Athens to perform his exercises, embraced him, and said thus: 'My dear son, you are going to mix in the world among a number of giddy young fellows, who launch out into the most outrageous abuse of women. Never believe them. Those fellows affect to despise them, only because they have not been able to render them despicable. For my own part, to begin with your mother, my virtuous wife, I have found in the fair sex that delicacy of sentiment, candour,

and truth, of which few men are capable. Do as I have done; choose an honest wife, of an even temper, solid character, and a sociable, and not austere, virtue. There are women of this stamp every where. My consent shall follow your choice. I am a tender father, and desire nothing but your happiness.' Alcidonis, full of these lessons, arrives at Athens. His first visit was to Seliana, to whom he had recommendations. Seliana in her youth had been handsome and agreeable: she was still agreeable, but began to be no longer handsome. After the first compliments, 'What is your business here?' said an old captain to him, who was husband to Seliana, and an old friend of his father. 'A fine thing, indeed, at your age, to bury one's self among the women! The Circus, the Piræeus, these are the schools for you, and not that trifling circle which they call the *beau monde*. I am mad when I see a young fellow come to Athens; they ought to go to Sparta.'

Alcidonis was disconcerted by so warm an apostrophe; but Seliana took his part warmly. 'That is so like you,' said she to her husband: 'Sparta, the Circus, the Piræeus! well! and prithee now, what do they learn in these famous schools?'—'To get money and fight,' replied the husband roughly. 'To get money! very noble indeed! To fight! very agreeable! The first is unworthy the ambition of a gallant man, and the second is learnt but too soon.'—'Not so soon, madam, not so very soon as you imagine. I am afraid that after passing his youth at the toilette, a man would make neither a good officer nor a good soldier.'—'Well, for my part, there is nothing more hideous and disagreeable in my eyes, than a man who has never learnt any thing but to fight. One would imagine that you came into the world only to cut one another's throats: peace has its talents and virtues, as well as war. Men are not always at the head of a troop.' 'So much the worse! by all the gods, so much the

worse! I wish it were forbid, even in time of peace, to quit the colours on pain of death.'—'How, sir! would not you allow us so much as one man?'—'You should have men enough, madam: you should have all the refuse. There are numbers quite useless to the state!'—'Very fine, indeed! you would reduce us then to the refuse of the commonwealth. The ladies are infinitely obliged to you.'—'I acquit them of all obligations.'—'No, sir, we are citizens, and we generously give up to the state all those figures that displease us, all faces that fright one, all those fierce characters that delight in nothing but murder, and are good for nothing else.'—'And you reserve to yourselves the handsome men who love to live, is it not so?'—'Certainly.'—'That is right; and the Areopagus, to be sure, will take care to pass it into a decree, to please you. Pardon me, sir, my wife is a fool. I leave you; for I can stand it no longer. Oh Hercules! madam, must I be your husband! These things happen to nobody but myself.' At these words he went out, stamping with his feet, and clapt the door roughly after him.

'Here is a strange family!' said Alcidonis. 'Pray, madam, have you often scenes of this kind?'—'Why, yes,' replied she coldly, 'always when I have company.'—'And when you are alone?'—'He grumbles still, but not quite so loud.'—'And how came you to marry him?'—'As all the world marry, for convenience and interest. As to any thing else, he is the best man in the world. When I am weary of him, I contradict him; he grows impatient, and walks off: then I do what I please. I advise you to show him respect. His friendship is not to be neglected, and may be of use to you. Do you bring recommendations to many people here?'—'To my father's particular friends; but the number of them is not great.'—'So much the better; we shall see each other the oftener. I wish it for your own sake, for on entering into a new

world, the wisest have need of a guide.'—'Will you, madam, condescend to be mine?'—'Either I or my husband; you shall take your choice.'—'My choice is made, madam.' Thus passed their first interview.

When the husband returned, 'You are a strange man,' said Seliana to him; 'your behaviour has frighted away this young man.'—'Whom you wanted to render familiar?'—'I understand you, sir; henceforth I shall order my door to be shut against him.'—'How! no, madam, I am not jealous. It would be beginning a little too late. I was not jealous in the bloom of your youth, and I shall hardly be so now you are grown older.'—'How extremely gallant! but I am used to it. Remember, however, that you owe a visit to this son of your old friend.'—'I shall see him, madam: I know life, and you may trust to my behaviour.'

The day after, at his entrance into Alcidonis's lodging, he resumed the conversation of the night before. 'Well,' said he to him, 'are you going to give into the effeminate manners of the Athenian youth? My wife has disposed you for it, no doubt. Take care; not of her, for her time is past, thank Heaven; but take care of the rest of her sex. They are most dangerous sirens. No safety in any dealings with them. They take you, deceive you, and quit you without shame. One would think, on seeing them amusing themselves with the men, that we were made only for their play-things.'—'If so,' said Alcidonis, 'the women of Athens are not like those of Megara!'—'At Megara, it is the very same as here. You are like your old father. The good man would swear only by his chaste better half. It was out of complaisance to him, that she dressed and saw company; out of piety, that she shut herself up with a young priest of Minerva; by way of retirement, that she went to pass the evenings at a little house which he had fitted up for himself: he relied upon

her virtue with the most absolute confidence in the world.'—'He had reason, no doubt: and I beg you, sir, to respect my mother's memory.'—'Your mother! your mother was a woman. Would you have had some being made on purpose? I have seen enough of them; but I know none but my termagant that is truly faithful; and what is still more, it is I that made her so. I rendered her virtuous in spite of her teeth; but I have not been able to root out those seeds of coquetry which nature or example plants in them almost at their birth. I would lay a wager that she is even capable of attempting to seduce you, for the sake of the pleasure of laughing at you. You would not be the first whom she has reduced to despair. She used to amuse herself formerly at this pretty little diversion, and then she has given me accounts of it, at which she laughed, as if she had been mad. By good luck she grows older, and the danger is no longer so great.'

Alcidonis's thoughts were taken up a considerable part of the night with what he had heard. 'The women here,' said he, 'are very terrible, then!' And he went to sleep with a resolution of avoiding them.

The fairy Galante appeared to him in a dream, and said, 'Nothing is so much like man as woman. All the good, all the evil, that is said of them, is true in particular, but false in general. One should neither trust in every one, nor distrust every one. Live with the women, but resign yourself to them only at times. I have not given you a determined character, that you may be more flexible to theirs. A precise man is an unsociable man. You will be charming, if they cry, *We do whatever we please with him.* But it is not enough to please; one must know likewise how to love, and to love neither too much nor too little. There are three sorts of love, passion, liking, and fancy. All the art of being happy consists in the proper

disposition of these three shades. For this purpose, here are four phials, which you alone shall use. They are as different in their virtues, as colours. You are to drink out of the purple phial, in order to be in love to distraction; out of the rose-coloured one, to skim the surface of sentiment and pleasure; out of the blue one, to taste of it without uneasiness and intoxication; and out of the white one, to come to yourself again.' At these words the fairy vanished like a vapour.

Alcidonis awakes quite ravished with so charming a dream. But what was his surprise, at finding in reality the four phials at his elbow! 'As for the trial,' said he, 'I shall make it at my leisure.' He gets up full of gratitude to the fairy, and the same day revisits Seliana. She was alone. 'You have seen my husband?' says she. 'Has not he been declaiming against gallantry?'—'Violently.'—'He has told you a thousand frightful stories of the women?'—'He has.'—'I hope he excepted me.'—'Only in the article of fidelity.'—'Poor man!'—'He is persuaded that you are faithful to him; but he says that you are only the more dangerous on that account, and that you divert yourself most cruelly with those who have the misfortune to fall in love with you.'—'Ah! how he abuses me! He would richly deserve .... But, hold, I must have some respect to myself.'—'Your virtue, he says, is of his own forming; and it is he that has made you honest.'—'He!'—'Yes, he; and in spite of your teeth.'—'In spite of my teeth! Upon my word! See whether he can make me virtuous in spite of my teeth!'—'I must own, that in your place ..... And I should be glad too to revenge his insult to my mother.'—'Your mother!'—'Yes; he dared to tell me that my father was a fool, and that there is no man in the world but himself who is not so.'—'Poor man! he has great reason to brag, truly! But, once more, I must respect myself. No, sir, I am no coquette; and

since he obliges me to justify myself, I have a heart as tender, and more tender, than another.' —'And what use do you make of that heart?'— 'Alas! no use at all; but you may easily believe that it is not for his sweet looks that I keep it. I am prudent for my own sake, that I may not expose myself to the caprice, inconstancy, and ingratitude of men. I feel that if I loved, I should love passionately, and I should wish to be passionately beloved.'—'Ah! and so you shall.'—'I dare not flatter myself with that: nothing is weaker, viler, and more inconstant, than the love of your sex. They have their likings, their fancies; but the passion of love, that intoxication which is its greatest charm, and its only excuse, they are quite unacquainted with.'—'For my part, madam, I know very well how to acquire that love which you deserve; and were I sure of a return, I should take a good dose of it!' Seliana smiled at Alcidonis's simplicity (for the fairy had given him that unaffected air, that ingenuous manner, which coquettes are so fond of). 'No,' said she, 'people are not inflamed all at once; and how can we possibly be in love? We do not know each other yet.' —'At your own time, madam; I am in no hurry. To-morrow we shall know each other better.'—'I shall see you to-morrow, then!'—'Yes, madam.'— 'After dinner, do you hear? For I would spare you the disagreeable circumstance of finding my husband at home. We shall be alone, and at liberty, and I shall talk reason to you.'

Alcidonis repaired to the appointment, with his phials in his pocket. Seliana received him in the most tempting deshabille. 'See there,' said Alcidonis, on seeing her, 'the privilege of beauty: the less ornament, the more charms.' Seliana affected to blush. 'Do you know,' said she, 'that this pretended simplicity of yours makes you dangerous? One might be taken by it, and be deceived.'—'I deceive you, madam! I never deceived any body.'

—'And you would begin with me?'—No, I swear.' —'Why then this flattering discourse, those tender looks?'—'You are handsome; I have eyes; I speak what I see: there is no flattery in that.'—'Why, indeed your tranquillity makes it evident that you have no design to seduce me.'—'Nay, nay, if you would but have it so, that tranquillity should soon vanish.'—'Oh, to be sure! and to be all on fire, you only wait for my consent; is it not so?'—'Nothing else; you need only say the word.' —'Indeed you are very fine, with that air of yours, so cold and so determined.'—'It is because I am certain of what I do.'—'What if I should oblige you to show some desire of being loved?'—'You may do it to any degree you please, I assure you.'—'I see, Alcidonis, that you don't know what you promise, and what I might demand.'—'Demand, madam, demand; my heart defies you. I will love you as much as you please.'—'You will love me then, if I please, to distraction?'—'To distraction; it is all the same to me.'—'His simplicity charms me. Very well, then, I would have you vastly in love with me.'—'Passionately?'—'Passionately.'—'And you will love me in like manner?' —'I believe so.'—'That is not enough.'—'Well. I am sure of it.'—'That is sufficient: now you shall see fine sport.'—'Where are you going?'—'Yours; allow me but one minute.'

The credulous Alcidonis, having retired into a corner, drank up the elixir in the purple phial, to the very last drop. He appears again, his eyes inflamed, his heart beating, and his voice almost extinct. The more foolery, the more gallantry: his language was rapid, broken, full of matter and warmth. Words were not sufficient to declare his sentiments: inarticulate accents supplied the place of speech; a vehement gesture, an impetuous action redoubled their energy. This pathetic eloquence put Seliana quite beside herself. She is moved, agitated, lost: she hardly knows him again.

and can scarce conceive so wonderful a change. She would seem to doubt, to fear, to hesitate still: vain efforts! Her heart relents, her eyes brighten, her reason fails; and one would have thought, the very moment after, that she also had drank of the same phial.

Two months passed away in transports which they found it difficult to confine within any bounds. The husband was perpetually rallying Alcidonis on his assiduities to his wife. 'Poor dupe,' said he to him, 'you would not believe me. You are caught; I am glad of it. Throw yourself away in dangling after her: you have a fine time of it!' Alcidonis took the best revenge he could for this insulting irony. But his passion was no longer seconded: Seliana's grew every day weaker and weaker. Seliana sufficed him: but he was no longer able to suffice Seliana. She wanted dissipation, diversion, and to return to the world, which she had forgot. Alcidonis was hurt, and saw with concern that she amused herself with every thing, while he was taken up with nothing but her. He became pensive, uneasy, and jealous; and went so far, that she was offended, and resolved to dismiss him.

'It is true,' said she to him, 'I have loved you: I was mad. I am now come to my senses again; do you do so too. We are nowhere enjoined to carry on love, even to decay. Every thing has an end, even love itself. Mine is enfeebled: you have chid me for it. It is become extinct; you distract yourself about it. So much the worse for you: but I cannot help it.'—'How! perfidious, ungrateful, perjured woman!'—'Go on; vent your reproaches, if that will comfort you.'—'Ah! just heaven! how I am treated!'—'Like a child, in whom we pardon every thing.'—'Are these, perfidious woman, the oaths that you have sworn a hundred times, to love me to the last gasp?'—

'Rash oaths, which bind us to nothing; mad, whoever makes them; mad, whoever trusts them. Would you believe any one who, on sitting down to table, should swear by all the gods that he would always have the same stomach?'—'The same stomach! What an image! Is this your boasted delicacy?'—'Another piece of folly. We disavow the empire of the senses, at the very instant we are their slaves. I am a woman, I love like a woman, and you ought not to have expected that Nature should work a miracle in your favour.' Alcidonis, at these words, tore his hair with despair. 'Very fine!' pursued she; 'what is that for? Will you be more amiable, or better loved, when you are bald? Hark ye, Alcidonis! I have still a compassionate friendship for you.'—'Ah! cruel woman! is it friendship or compassion that I require of you?'—'You must really bring yourself to that: I feel nothing more for you. Which of the two is to blame, the party who ceases to love, or that which ceases to be agreeable? The question is not yet nor will soon be determined. In the mean time, be advised, and take your resolution with courage.'—'It is taken, ungrateful woman, it is taken,' said he, withdrawing to drink; and I need not say, that he had recourse to the white phial.

On a sudden his senses were all calm, and his reason returned. 'Indeed,' said he, returning to Seliana with an easy and sedate air, 'I was a fool to make myself uneasy. We have been lovers; now we are friends. All this must happen in life. Passion is a fever: when it is over, there is an end of the matter. We are not obliged to see one another any longer than is agreeable, and nothing is more natural than to change when we are tired. You loved me as long as you were able. It would have been ridiculous to pique yourself on a constancy that was painful! Enjoy, madam, the right your beauty gives you of multiplying your con-

quests. I am too happy in having been of the number. Every man in his turn, and I wish you much entertainment.'

Seliana was as much surprised as piqued at this coldness. She wished, indeed, that he should console himself, but neither so soon, nor so easily. So sudden a change was inconceivable. On reflection she was persuaded, that this apparent tranquillity was only a pretended disgust; and she failed not to tell some of her she friends, that the poor boy was mad with despair, that he had put her into a terrible fright, and that she had all the difficulty in the world to prevent him from committing violence on himself. The day following, Alcidonis went to sup at the voluptuous Alcipe's, with some of the youngest and handsomest women in Athens. 'All one to me,' said he to himself: 'the purple phial is dry; and it would be to no purpose for the fairy to replenish it, for may I die if I would taste a single drop of it.' As soon as he saw all those beauties, 'Ah! now let us trifle for once: this is the moment for whim and frolic.' He drinks of the rose-coloured phial, and immediately his eyes and desires wander without fixing.

Chance seated him at table next to a fair beauty, with languishing looks, and an extreme modesty and timidity, with which he was sensibly touched: but he had on the other side of him a *brunette*, dazzling the beholders with her freshness and vivacity. He had a great mind to the latter, yet was deeply smitten with the former; and on further consideration would have preferred the fair beauty, had it not been for a certain *je ne scai quoi* which inclined him to the brown. This *je ne scai quoi* determined his choice. He showed her all the assiduities of a warm gallantry; which she received with an air of inattention, as an homage that was due to her. Alcidonis was piqued at it. Whim, as well as passion, is irritated by obstacles. Excited by the desire of pleasing, he

formed all the delight of the entertainment. Corinna, his charming *brunette*, saw that the ladies envied her her conquest. She at length perceived the value of it, and some looks of complacency infused hope into the heart of her new lover.

The hour of parting now arrived. Corinna rises; he follows. 'You will attend me, then?' said she to him, receiving the offer of his hand. 'I am sensible of all the sacrifices you make me.' He swore that he made her none. 'Pardon me: I carry you away from the handsomest women in Athens; and that is no mean triumph.'—'I did but just look at them: but they appeared to me pretty well.'—'Pretty well! Your commendations are very sparing indeed! Will you only call Cleonida *pretty well?* Those large eyes, and regular features, that majestic figure . . . . one would take her for a goddess.'—'True; the stately Juno.'—'You wicked d—l! and Amate, what d'ye think of her? That air of voluptuousness, that attracting negligence, which seems to invite pleasure.'—'Right; the picture of opportunity neglected.'—'Neglected! a cruel phrase: I will not repeat it; it would pass into a proverb. I hope at least that you will show some favour to the ingenuous and timid air of Cephisa. That lively complexion, that tender look, that mouth which is afraid to smile, and yet when it smiles is so beautiful: what say you to her?'—'That she wants nothing but a soul.'—'And you would be glad to give her yours?'—'I confess, that if it had not been for yourself she should have had the apple.'—'Alas! and what would she have done with it? Nothing is more cold, more indolent, more insensible than Cephisa.'—'And therefore she had only my first glance.'—'Yet I caught you, when supper was almost over, with your eyes fixed upon her.'—'True, I admired her as I would a fine model in wax.'—'Right, a fine model, if you please: but the general opinion is, that this model stands in great need of drapery.'

While they thus ran over the objects of Corinna's jealousy, they arrived at her house. 'Will you walk up for a moment?' said she to Alcidonis: 'it is early; we will have a little chat.' Alcidonis was transported. The fairy, who had made him so censorious with Corinna, knew what she was doing. The most flattering compliment to a handsome woman, is the abuse of her rivals: and this she had taken well at his hands.

'I long,' pursued Corinna, 'to know, in my turn, the good and ill you think of me.'—'The ill! alas, if you have any, have you given me time or occasion to find it out? You are surrounded with illusion. That lustre, that sparkling vivacity, would conceal deformity itself: I should have taken it for beauty. I see you, I am dazzled, intoxicated, transported: this is my case. 'Tis an infatuation, a madness, whatever you please; but nothing in the world is truer: and you can make me, by a single word, the happiest or most miserable of men.'—'Madness indeed!' cried she, seeing him at her knees: 'you see me by chance, you love me, if one may believe it, and dare confess it to me! Do you know whether I merit this? Do you know whether I can make any return to it?'—'No, madam, I know nothing. You are perhaps the most cruel of women, the most inconstant, the most perfidious. That fine person, those charming features, may conceal an insensible soul. I fear it, yet I will run the hazard of it; and though the danger were as great again, it is not in my power to avoid it.'—'Ah! I perceive plainly by these strokes the truth of your general character. You, Alcidonis, are the most dangerous of men, and the person whom of all mankind I should most dread to love.'—'Why so? What have you heard of me?'—'That you are one who love passionately; and a man who loves passionately is insupportable: that you abandon yourself distractedly; that you love like a madman,

and want to be loved in the same manner. If we do not love as passionately as yourself, then come nothing but complaints and reproaches. You become sulky, uneasy, and jealous. There is no knowing how to quit you, and no possibility of keeping you.'—'It is true, madam, that I have given into these absurdities; but I am now thoroughly cured. You may take me with safety; and I will sign my discharge beforehand.'—'Do not imagine, sir, that I am jesting with you: what but liberty forms the charms of love? Without these a lover becomes a husband, and indeed it would be no misfortune to become a widow.'—'I understand reason, my beautiful Corinna; and you may depend upon me.'—'You would give your word of honour then to a woman, who should entertain a weakness for you, to retire without making a bustle, as soon as she should have told you as a friend, I have loved you, but now I love you no longer?'—'To be sure: I have learned to live, and you need only try me.'—'Well, I will then; but remember, that I engage myself to love you no longer than you shall be agreeable.'

'I see plainly,' said Alcidonis within himself, 'that here the white phial will be of great service to me.' He was mistaken: he had no occasion for it: the impression of the rose-coloured one very soon vanished of itself. He was yet at Corinna's, and yet the idea of the other beauties he had seen at Alcipe's presented itself to his imagination. 'Such a one is lively,' says he, 'but that is all; no sentiment, no delicacy. That other changes her lovers as she does her clothes. To-morrow I should be dismissed, if to-morrow any other amuses her. I should have a fine time of it, to throw away my sighs on her! I should have done much better to have bestowed them on that languishing *fair* beauty, whose eyes were raised towards me in so tender, so affecting a manner. Corinna speaks ill of Cephisa, and therefore Cephisa must have merit. She is not

very animated; but what a pleasure it would be to animate her! A woman naturally lively is so to all the world; but such a one would be so to me alone. Come, let me go and see her; besides, I should not care to be dismissed. Corinna shall find that I am not one of those who are to be dropped as she pleases, and that I know how to give a dismission full as well as herself.'

He repeats to Cephisa the same things that he said to Corinna, but with more discretion. 'Is it possible?' cried she, without any emotion. 'What! you would be unhappy, if I were not to love you?'—'More unhappy than I can express.'—'I am sorry for it, for I don't know how to love.'—'Oh! my beautiful Cephisa, with that enchanting smile, that tender look, that voice which goes to the very soul, you don't know how to love?'—'No, indeed.'—'But if I should teach you how?'—'You would do me great pleasure, for I am very curious. But so many have attempted it, and not one has succeeded. My husband himself would lose all his labour.'—'Your husband! I believe it; but have you had lovers?'—'Many, and those some of the handsomest and most tender.'—'And did you make them happy?'—'No; for they all complained that I did not love them. It was not my fault; I did all in my power. Only think! I used now and then to take four at a time, in order to endeavour, among the number, to love at least one or two: yet all to no purpose.'

'This,' said Alcidonis, 'is a very rare instance of ingenuity; but let us not be discouraged, my dear; you will love me.'—'Do you think so?'—'I do think so: you have sensibility?'—'Yes, at times, here and there; but it passes away in a moment.'—'This is certainly a disease. Have you, in order for your cure, offered up any sacrifices to Venus?'—'My husband has offered up a great many; but he always found me the same at his return from the temple.'—'And why did he not carry you there?'

—'He took care not to do that: the priest was young, and wanted to initiate me.'—'Initiate you! And do you know what that means?'—'Alas! not I; I know nothing of it.'—'Shall I show you?' resumed Alcidonis, taking some little liberties with her. 'Softly, sir,' cried she; 'you act as if I loved you; I am not in love with you yet.'—'How should you know that, unless we make some experiments?'—'I have made a thousand; but all that proves nothing. At first I think I love, and then I think I do not. It is better to wait till it comes; and if it comes, I will tell you.'

Alcidonis, from day to day, made some new progress on the indolent sensibility of Cephisa; but she was not yet come to the pitch that he wanted to bring her to. In order to heat her imagination, he proposed to meet her at a feast which was to be celebrated in honour of Venus. She consented, on condition that she should not be initiated. The day after, each of them, out of decency, repaired separately to their quarter. The girls and the boys, arrayed like the Graces and the Loves, sung hymns in honour of the goddess, and danced to the sound of the lyre, beneath the shade of a sacred grove that surrounded the temple.

Cephisa got there first. 'Ah!' said she to Alcidonis, 'I was looking for you; I have good news to tell you. The goddess has anticipated our vows: I think I now begin to love you in good earnest. This very night I have seen you in my sleep. You was pressing; I was animated.'—'Well!'—'Well, I will tell you the rest at supper.'—'At supper?' replied Alcidonis, with an indifferent air, and his eyes fixed on the feast: 'At supper let it be, with all my heart. What a beautiful dancing girl is there! how charmingly that woman sings!'—'We shall be alone, do you hear?'—'Alone! very well. I should be glad to know who that handsome dancer is?'—'Alcidonis, you do not hear me!'—'Pardon me, I do hear you: but I am looking out for some-

body who may tell me—Oh, Pamphilus, one word· Tell me who is that beautiful dancer?'—'It is Chloe,' says Pamphilus. 'I am to sup with her.' —'This evening?'—'This very evening.'—'I should be glad to make one.'—'That cannot be.'—'I beseech you, my dear Pamphilus, by our friendship.' —'You do not consider, Alcidonis,' whispered the disordered Cephisa: 'you are to sup with me; I told you so.'—'True, I intended it; but I have promised my friend Pamphilus. My word is sacred, and I cannot break it.'

He saw Chloe, found her adorable, as it is called, for a quarter of an hour, and insipid the moment after. He saw Phillira the singer: he was smitten with her for an evening; and the next day tired of her. 'Alas! how fatiguing are whimsies!' says he: 'every instant new desires, without satisfaction. It is the torment of the Danaides. Away with these transitory beams of sentiment, which revive so fast and leave me no repose! let me drink oblivion to my follies.' He said, and emptied the white phial. He had now none left but the blue; and his happiness depended on the use he should make of it.

Alcidonis studied philosophy under Aristus, the academician. Aristus dying, left behind him a young widow, one of the most virtuous and beautiful women in the world. The disciple of Aristus thought it his duty to give the widow all the consolation and assistance of friendship. Glycerium refused his offers with a modesty mingled with sweetness and pride. 'I have little wealth,' said she, 'and less desires. My husband has left me a most valuable inheritance, a relish for the golden mean, and the habit of living upon little.' So much prudence united to so much beauty, deserved a delicate and lasting attachment. 'It is time,' said Alcidonis, 'that I should drink out of the blue phial.'

A soft and lively warmth diffuses itself through

all his veins; not the restlessness of whim; not the transport of passion; but a delightful emotion, the presage of happiness. He burns to belong to Glycerium; he burns to have henceforth but one fortune with her, one life, and one soul; and giving way to his impatience, he proposes marriage to her. Glycerium was not insensible to this mark of love and esteem. 'You are generous enough,' said she, 'to offer me your hand. I will deserve it by refusing it. I should be unworthy of it, if I accepted it.' It was in vain that he urged his father's consent, that he made it a crime in her to refuse him, that he menaced her with the reproaches she would throw out against herself, for having made him unhappy; she appeared immoveable.

Glycerium, however, in her retirement, wept without ceasing. The only slave she had left saw the grief that consumed her, but was not able to penetrate the cause. Should he attribute it to the death of her husband? What! lament, without ceasing, a philosophical husband! That was not natural. His mistress often writ to a citizen of Argos; and the answers he returned her forced deep sighs from her. Curiosity or zeal induced the slave to open one of Glycerium's letters. It was conceived in these terms:

'If you have not a heart of brass, you will be touched, my lord, with the despair of an unfortunate woman, who would give her life for the liberty of her father. Aristus, my husband, to whom I was not ashamed to confess that I was born of a slave, spared no pains to restore my father to my wishes. He caused him to be sought after in vain. I learn at last that he is in your power, and I learn it in indigence. I have made an estimate of every thing that I have left; but, alas! I am far from being able to raise what you demand: so that the only resource now left me is, to offer myself in exchange for my father. It is not just that I should be free, while my father is a slave. I am

young; he is borne down by years. You may derive more advantage from my servitude than from his. My hands will inure themselves to labour; my heart is prepared for patience. Were I inclined to avail myself of the easy means which those of my age have in their power to seduce and interest the men, I should not be reduced to this cruel extremity; but slavery is less shameful than vice, and I make my choice without hesitation.'

The slave, struck with admiration and pity, carried this letter to Alcidonis. 'Ah!' cried he, his heart overcome, and his eyes swimming with tears, 'here then is the cause of her refusal. She was born a slave! What signifies that? Virtue is the empress of the whole world. Fortune only should be ashamed. What piety! what tenderness! You, Glycerium, you in slavery! Why have I not a throne to offer you? I conjure thee by the gods,' said he to the slave, 'keep this a secret. I will go. The tears of thy mistress shall soon be wiped away, and thy zeal shall have its reward.'

Alcidonis repairs to Argos, and Glycerium's father is set free. The unknown stranger, who procured him his liberty, gives him wherewith to defray his expenses to Athens, and says to him at parting, 'You are now going to see Glycerium; you owe your liberty to her tenderness and virtue. It is in her power to be happy, and to render you so: and if the service I have just now done you be dear to you, promise me to engage this virtuous daughter of yours to conceal her birth and your misfortunes from the eyes of the man who demands her in marriage. I know his respect for her is so great, that it would shock him to see her blush. Wherefore, if your benefactor ever appears before you, suppress your gratitude; for he would be known by you alone.'—'What!' said the old man, melting into tears, 'shall my daughter never know the hand that has broken my chains?'—'No,' replied Alcidonis, 'overwhelm not Glycerium with this load

of humiliation. It is one of those duties that debase the soul. Leave to her, I conjure you, its nobleness and freedom.' The old man promised his deliverer to comply.

On his arrival at Athens, his daughter faints away at the sight of him. 'Oh! my father,' said she to him, 'what god grants you to my tears? Has then your master's avarice at length relented?'—'Yes, my daughter,' replied the old man, 'I know that I owe to your tenderness my life, and the happiness of coming to die in your arms.'

Alcidonis, at his return, came to press Glycerium by all the tenderness of love to consent to their marriage. The old man had not been wanting to exhort his daughter to silence on the humbleness of their former condition. 'No,' replied she to him with spirit, 'it is less humiliating to confess than to be silent; they whom it shall concern to know me, shall learn from myself who I am.'

'You choose, then,' said she to Alcidonis, 'that I should open my soul to you? While I was unhappy, I concealed my grief; but you deserve to partake of my joy. Know that my destiny decreed me to be born in servitude. I was emancipated; but my father still groaned under it. Some propitious deity restored him to me; he is free; he is here; you shall see him. However, the blot of our servitude is not to be effaced; and to confess to you who we are, is to declare irrevocably that neither your honour nor my gratitude will permit me to listen to your offers.'

'You do me injustice, Glycerium,' said Alcidonis, with an air of tenderness mingled with reproach. 'Do you think me less a philosopher, or less generous, than Aristus? Did you conceal from him the misfortune of your birth? No, certainly. Did not he despise the injustice of fortune and opinion? I am his disciple: his precepts are engraved in my heart. Is it reproachful to follow his example? Or do you imagine that I have not virtue enough

to imitate him?'—'It is not virtue,' said she to him, smiling, 'but prudence, that you want. Aristus had had time to try himself. You are not, like him, of an age at which we can answer for ourselves; and I would save you the bitterness of repentance.'

Alcidonis, grieved at her invincible constancy, fell at Glycerium's feet, in order to move her by pity. In that moment appears the old man, whom he had delivered from slavery. 'What do I see? Ah! daughter,' cried he, 'it is he . . .' and then all of a sudden calling to mind Alcidonis's prohibition, he stopt short, and remained with his eyes fixed on his deliverer, as it were inadvertently letting fall tears. 'What! my father,' said Glycerium, astonished, 'you know him then? It is he, you say! make an end. What has he done? Where have you known him? Alcidonis, you look down! you blush! My father views you with the most melting tenderness! Ah! I understand you both. My father, it is he that redeemed you; it is to him that I owe my father.'—'Yes, my daughter, there is my benefactor.'—'Is this,' said Alcidonis, embracing the old man, who threw himself at his feet, 'is this what you promised me?'—'Pardon me,' said the old man, 'my heart was touched: my daughter has guessed my secret; it is not my fault.'—'Well, then, since she knows all, oblige this cruel daughter not to drive me to despair. It is her hand, her heart, that I ask as the price of the happiness I restore to her.' The old man, struck to the heart, warmly reproached his daughter for a piece of ingratitude of which she was not guilty; and taking her trembling hand, put it into that of his deliverer. 'It is to your father that I owe it, that I owe this hand which you refused me,' said Alcidonis to her tenderly, and kissing her hand. 'Console yourself,' replied Glycerium, with a smile; 'you owe him only my hand; my heart surrendered of itself.'

Alcidonis, transported, employed the remainder of the day in preparing to set out on the morrow for Megara. That night, while he enjoyed a gentle slumber, the fairy Galante appeared to him again, and said, 'Be happy, Alcidonis; love without uneasiness; possess without disgust; desire in order to enjoy; make others jealous, but never be so yourself. It is not advice that I now give you; it is your destiny that I unfold. You have drank at the spring of perfect happiness. I distribute with a lavish hand the purple and rose-coloured phials; but the blue bottle is a gift which I reserve for my favourites.'

LAUSUS AND LYDIA.

Lausus, equûm domitor, debellatorque ferarum.
Virg. Æn. vii.

THE character of Mezentius, king of Tyrrhene, is well known. A bad prince and a good father, cruel and tender by turns. He had nothing of the tyrant, nothing that showed violence, as long as his desires knew no obstacle; but the calm of this haughty soul was the repose of a lion.

Mezentius had a son named Lausus, whose valour and beauty rendered him famous among the young heroes of Italy. Lausus had attended Mezentius in the war against the king of Præneste. His father, at the very summit of joy, saw him, covered with blood, fighting and vanquishing by his side. The king of Præneste, driven out of his territories, and seeking safety in flight, had left in the hands of the conqueror a treasure more precious than his crown, a princess at that age wherein the heart has only the virtues of nature, and nature has all the charms of innocence and beauty. Every thing that the Graces in tears possess, either noble or affecting, was painted in Lydia's countenance. In her grief, courage, and dignity, one might discover the daughter of kings amidst the crowd of slaves. She received the first compliments of her enemies without haughtiness, without acknowledgment, as an homage due to her rank, the noble sentiments of which were not weakened by ill fortune.

She heard her father named, and at that name lifted up to heaven her fine eyes, filled with tears. All hearts were moved. Mezentius himself, astonished, forgot his pride and age. Prosperity, which hardens weak souls, softens proud hearts, and nothing can be gentler than a hero after a victory.

If the savage heart of old Mezentius was not able to resist the charms of his captive, what was the impression on the virtuous soul of young Lausus! He mourned over his exploits; he reproached himself with his victory: it cost Lydia tears. 'Let her avenge herself,' said he; 'let her hate me as much as I love her; I have deserved it but too much.' But an idea still more distressful presents itself to his imagination: he sees Mezentius, astonished, softened, pass on a sudden from rage to clemency. He judged rightly that humanity alone had not effected this revolution; and the fear of having his father for a rival completed his confusion.

At the age of Mezentius jealousy follows closely upon love. The tyrant observed the eyes of Lausus with an uneasy attention: he saw extinguished in them, all at once, that joy and ardour which had lighted up the face of the young hero on his first victory. He saw him disturbed: he caught some looks which it was but too easy to understand. From that instant he considered himself as betrayed; but nature interposed, and suspended his rage. A tyrant even in his fury constrains himself to think that he is just; and before he condemned his son, Mezentius laboured to convict him.

He began by dissembling his own passion with so much art, that the prince looked on his former fears as vain, and considered the attentions of love as nothing more than the effects of clemency. At first he affected to allow Lydia all the appearances of liberty; but the tyrant's court was full of spies and informers, the usual retinue of men of power,

who, not being able to make themselves beloved, place their greatness in being feared.

His son was no longer afraid of paying Lydia a respectful homage. He mingled with his sentiments an interest so delicate and tender, that Lydia very soon began to reproach herself for the hatred which she thought she entertained for the blood of her enemy; while Lausus lamented that he had contributed to Lydia's misfortunes. He called the gods to witness that he would do all in his power to repair them. 'The king, my father,' says he, 'is as generous after victory, as untractable before battle: satisfied with victory, he is incapable of oppression. It is easier than ever for the king of Præneste to engage him to a peace that shall be glorious to both. That peace will dry up your tears, beautiful Lydia; but will it efface the remembrance of their crime who caused you to shed them? Why did I not see all my blood flow rather than those tears?'

Lydia's replies, which were full of modesty and greatness, betrayed to Lausus no warmer emotion than that of gratitude; though at the bottom of her heart she was but too sensible of the care he took to console her. She sometimes blushed for having listened to him with complaisance; but her father's interests made it a law to her to avail herself of such a support.

In the mean time their conferences growing more frequent, became also more animated, more interesting, more intimate; and love made its way insensibly through respect and gratitude, as a flower, which, in order to blow, opens the slight texture in which it is enfolded.

Deceived more and more by the feigned tranquillity of Mezentius, the credulous Lausus flattered himself that he should very soon see his duty accord with his inclination; and nothing in the world, in his opinion, was easier than to reconcile them. The treaty of peace which he had

meditated was reduced to two articles; to restore to the king of Præneste his crown and his territories, and to make his marriage with the princess the band of union between the two powers. He communicated this project to Lydia. The confidence he placed in it, the advantages he saw accruing from it, the transports of joy which the idea alone inspired him with, surprised the lovely captive into a smile, mingled with tears. 'Generous prince,' says she to him, 'may heaven fulfil the wishes you pour out for my father! I shall not be sorry that I am made the pledge of peace, and the token of gratitude.' This touching reply was accompanied with a look still more touching. The tyrant was informed of all. His first transport would have hurried him to sacrifice his rival; but this son was the only support of his crown, the only barrier between the people and him: the same stroke would have rendered him completely odious to his subjects, and have taken from him the only defender whom he could oppose to the public hatred. Fear is the ruling passion of tyrants. Mesentius resolves to dissemble. He orders his son into his presence, talks to him with good humour, and bids him prepare to set out the next day for the frontiers of his territories, where he had left his army. The prince endeavoured to conceal the grief which wrung his soul, and set out without having time to take leave of Lydia.

The very day of Lausus' departure, Mesentius had caused honourable conditions of peace to be proposed to the king of Præneste, the first article of which was his marriage with the daughter of the vanquished monarch. That unfortunate monarch hesitated not to consent; and the same ambassador that offered him peace brought back his agreement for an answer.

Lausus had in the court a friend who had been attached to him from his infancy. A remarkable

resemblance to the young prince had been the means of making the fortune of this young man, who was called Phanor: but they resembled each other still more in their disposition than their figure; the same inclinations, the same virtues: Lausus and Phanor seemed to have but one soul. Lausus at parting had confided to Phanor his passion and his despair. The latter was therefore inconsolable on hearing of the marriage of Lydia with Mezentius. He thought it his duty to acquaint the prince with it. The situation of the lover at this news cannot be described: his heart is troubled, his reason forsakes him; and in the distraction of a blind sorrow he writes to Lydia the warmest and most imprudent letter that love ever dictated. Phanor was charged with the delivery of it. He went to her at the hazard of his life, if he should be discovered. He was so. Mezentius, enraged, orders him to be loaded with irons, and dragged to a frightful prison.

However, every thing was prepared for the celebration of this unhappy marriage. We may justly conclude that the feast was suitable to the character of Mezentius. Wrestling, the cestus, gladiators, combats between men and animals bred up to carnage, every thing that barbarity has invented for its amusements, was to have graced the pomp: nothing was wanting to this bloody spectacle, but persons to fight against the wild beasts; for it was customary to expose to these fights none but criminals condemned to die, and Mezentius, who on any suspicion was always eager to put the innocent to death, retarded still less the punishment of the guilty. There remained in the prisons none but the faithful friend of Lausus. 'Let him be exposed,' said Mezentius; 'let him fall a prey to devouring lions: the traitor deserves a more cruel death; but this best suits his crime and my vengeance, and his punishment is a feast worthy of injured love.'

Lausus having in vain expected the answer of his friend, impatience gave way to affright. 'Should we be discovered!' says he; 'should I have lost my friend by my fatal imprudence! Lydia herself.... Ah! I tremble. No, I cannot live any longer in this dreadful uncertainty.' He sets out; he disguises himself carefully; he arrives: he hears the reports spread among the people: he learns that his friend is in chains, and that the next day is to unite Lydia with Mezentius: he learns that they are preparing the feast which is to precede the marriage-festival, and that, by way of show at this festival, they are to see the unhappy Phanor a prey to wild beasts. He shrinks at this recital; a deadly chilness spreads through all his veins: he comes again to himself; but lost in distraction, he falls on his knees, and cries out, 'Great gods, restrain my hand; my despair terrifies me: let me die to save my friend; but let me die with virtue!' Resolved to deliver his dear Phanor, though he should perish in his stead, he flies to the gates of the prison: but how is he to enter there? He addresses himself to the slave, whose office it was to carry food to the prisoners. 'Open your eyes,' said he, 'and know me: I am Lausus; I am the son of the king. I expect an important service from you: Phanor is confined here: I will see him, I will. I have but one way to come at him: give me your clothes: fly! There are the pledges of my acknowledgment: withdraw yourself from the vengeance of my father. If you betray me, you rush on your ruin; if you assist me in my undertaking, my favour shall you find in the very heart of the deserts.'

The weak and timorous slave yields to his promises and threats. He assists the prince in disguising himself, and disappears, after having told him the hour at which he was to present himself, and the conduct he was to observe in order to deceive the vigilance of the guards. Night ap-

proaches, the moment arrives, Lausus presents himself: he assumes the name of the slave; the bolts of the dungeon open with a dismal sound. By the feeble glimmering of a torch, he penetrates into this mansion of horror; he advances, he listens; the accents of a moaning voice strike his ear; he knows it to be the voice of his friend; he sees him lying down in a corner of the cell, covered with rags, consumed with weakness, the paleness of death on his countenance, and the fire of despair in his eyes. 'Leave me,' said Phanor to him, taking him for the slave; 'away with these odious nourishments; suffer me to die. Alas!' added he, sending forth cries interrupted by sighs, 'alas! my dear Lausus is still more unhappy than I. O, ye gods! if he knew the state to which he has reduced his friend!'—'Yes,' cried Lausus, throwing himself on his bosom, 'yes, my dear Phanor, he does know it, and he partakes of it.'—'What do I see?' cried Phanor, transported: 'Ah, Lausus! ah! my prince!' At these words both of them lose the use of their senses; their arms are locked in each other, their hearts meet, their sighs are intermingled. They remain for a long time mute and immoveable, stretched out on the floor of the dungeon; grief stifles their voice, and they answer each other only by embracing more closely, and bathing one another with their tears. Lausus at last coming to himself, 'Let us not lose time,' said he to his friend; 'take these clothes, get hence, and leave me here.'—'What I, great gods! can I be so vile? Ah, Lausus, could you believe it? Ought you to propose it to me?'—'I know you well,' said the prince; 'but you should also know me. The sentence is pronounced, your punishment is prepared; you must die or fly.'—'Fly!'—'Hear me; my father is violent, but he is not without sensibility; nature asserts her right over his heart: if I deliver you from death, I have only to melt him to compassion for myself; and his

arm, when lifted up against a son, will be easily disarmed.'—'He would strike,' said Phanor, 'and your death would be my crime; I cannot abandon you.'—'Well, then,' said Lausus, 'remain here; but at your death you shall see mine also. Depend not on my father's clemency; it would be in vain for him to pardon me; think not that I would pardon myself. This hand, which wrote the fatal billet that condemns you, this hand, which, even after its crime, is still the hand of your friend, shall reunite us in your own despite.' In vain would Phanor have insisted. 'Let us argue no longer,' interrupted Lausus; 'you can say nothing to me that can equal the shame of surviving my friend, after I have destroyed him. Your pressing earnestness makes me blush, and your prayers are an affront. I will answer for my own safety, if you will fly: I swear to die, if you will stay and perish. Choose: the moments now are precious.'

Phanor knew his friend too well to pretend to shake his resolution. 'I consent,' says he, 'to let you try the only means of safety that is left us; but live, if you would have me live: your scaffold shall be mine.'—'I readily believe it,' said Lausus; 'and your friend esteems you too much to desire you to survive him.' At these words they embraced, and Phanor went out of the dungeon in the habit of the slave, which Lausus had just thrown off.

What a night! what a dreadful night for Lydia! Alas! how shall we paint the emotions that arise in her soul, that divide, that tear it, between love and virtue? She adores Lausus, she detests Mezentius, she sacrifices herself to her father's interests, she delivers herself up to the object of her hatred, she tears herself for ever from the wishes of an adored lover. They lead her to the altar as it were to punishment. Barbarous Mezentius! thou art content to reign over the heart by violence and

fear; it suffices thee that thy consort trembles before thee, as a slave before his master. Such is love in the heart of a tyrant.

Yet, alas! it is for him alone that she is hereafter to live: it is to him that she is going to be united. If she resists, she must betray her lover and her father: a refusal will discover the secret of her soul; and if Lausus is suspected to be dear to her, he is undone.

It was in this cruel agitation that Lydia waited the day. The terrible day arrives. Lydia, dismayed and trembling, sees herself decked out, not as a bride to be presented at the altars of Love and Hymen, but as one of those innocent victims which a barbarous piety crowned with flowers before it sacrificed them.

They lead her to the place where the spectacle is to be exhibited; the people assemble there in multitudes; the sports begin. I shall not stop to describe the engagements at the cestus, at wrestling, at the sword; a more dreadful object engages our attention.

An enormous lion advances. At first, with a calm pride, he traverses the arena, throwing his dreadful looks round the amphitheatre that environs him: a confused murmur announces the terror that he inspires. In a short time the sound of the clarions animate him; he replies by his roarings; his shaggy mane is erected around his monstrous head; he lashes his loins with his tail, and the fire begins to issue from his sparkling eyeballs. The affrighted populace wish and dread to see the wretch appear who is to be delivered up to the rage of this monster. Terror and pity seize on every breast.

The combatant, whom Mezentius's guards themselves had taken for Phanor, presents himself. Lydia could not distinguish him. The horror with which she is seized had obliged her to turn

away her eyes from this spectacle, which shocks the sensibility of her tender soul. Alas! what would she feel, if she knew that Phanor, that the dear friend of Lausus, is the criminal which they have devoted; if she knew that Lausus himself had taken his friend's place, and that it is he that is going to fight?

Half naked, his hair dishevelled, he walks with an intrepid step: a poniard for the attack, a buckler for defence, are the only arms by which he is protected. Mezentius, prepossessed, sees in him only the guilty Phanor. His own blood is dumb, Nature is blind; it is his own son whom he delivers up to death, and his bowels are not moved; resentment and revenge stifle every other sentiment. He sees with a barbarous joy the fury of the lion rising by degrees. Lausus, impatient, provokes the monster, and urges him to the combat. He advances towards him, the lion springs forward. Lausus avoids him. Thrice the enraged animal makes towards him with his foaming jaws, and thrice Lausus escapes his murderous fangs.

In the mean time Phanor learns what is doing. He runs up, and bears down the multitude before him, while his piercing cries make the amphitheatre resound. 'Stop, Mezentius! save your son: it is he; it is Lausus that is engaged.' Mezentius looks and knows Phanor, who hastens towards him: 'O ye gods! what do I see! My people, assist me; throw yourselves on the arena, ravish my son from the jaws of death.' At the name of Lausus, Lydia falls senseless on the steps of the amphitheatre; her heart is chilled, her eyes are covered with darkness. Mezentius sees only his son, who is now in inevitable danger: a thousand hands arm in vain for his defence; the monster pursues him, and would have devoured him before they could have arrived to his as-

sistance: but, O incredible wonder! O unlooked-for happiness! Lausus, while he eludes the bounds of the furious animal, strikes him a mortal blow, and the sword, with which he is armed, is drawn reeking from the lion's heart. He falls, and swims in seas of blood, vomited through his foaming jaws. The universal alarm now changes into triumph, and the people reply to Mezentius's doleful cries only by shouts of admiration and joy. These shouts recal Lydia to life; she opens her eyes, and sees Lausus at Mezentius's feet, holding in one hand the bloody dagger, and in the other his dear and faithful Phanor. 'It is I,' said he to his father, 'it is I alone who am culpable. Phanor's crime was mine: it was my duty to expiate it. I forced him to resign his place; and was about to kill myself if he refused. I live, I owe that life to him; and if your son be still dear to you, you owe your son to him: but if your vengeance is not appeased, our days are in your hands: strike; we will perish together; our hearts have sworn it.' Lydia, trembling at this discourse, viewed Mezentius with suppliant eyes, overflowing with tears. The tyrant's cruelty could not withstand this trial. The cries of nature and the voice of remorse put to silence jealousy and revenge. He remains for a long time immoveable and dumb, rolling by turns, on the objects that surround him, looks of trouble and confusion, in which love, hatred, indignation, and pity, combat and succeed each other. All tremble around the tyrant. Lausus, Phanor, Lydia, a multitude innumerable, wait with terror the first words that he is to pronounce. He submits at last, in spite of himself, to that virtue whose ascendancy overpowers him; and passing of a sudden, with impetuous violence, from rage to tenderness, he throws himself into his son's arms. 'Yes,' says he, 'I pardon thee, and I pardon also thy friend. Live! love one another! But there re-

mains one sacrifice more for me to make thee, and thou hast just now rendered thyself worthy of it: receive it, then,' said he, with a new effort: 'receive this hand, the gift of which is dearer to thee than life: it is thy valour which has forced it from me—it is that alone could have obtained it.'

BY GOOD LUCK.

'No, madam,' said the Abbé de Châteauneuf to the old Marchioness of Lisban, 'I cannot believe that what is called virtue in a woman is so rare as is said: and I would lay a wager, without going farther, that you yourself have never been guilty of one indiscretion.'—'Upon my word, my dear abbé, I could almost say, like Agnes, *do not lay.*'—'Should I lose?'—'No, you would win; but by so little, so very little, that, to say the truth, it is not worth boasting of.'—'That is to say, your prudence has ran some risks.'—'Alas, yes! I have seen it more than once on the point of being shipwrecked. *By good luck* you behold it in port.'—'Ah, madam, trust me with the recital of your adventures.'—'With all my heart. We are arrived at an age wherein we have no longer any thing to dissemble, and my youth is now so long past, that I may speak of it as of a gay dream.

'If you recollect the Marquis of Lisban, he was one of those insipid fine figures which say to you, *Here am I!* He was one of those awkward pieces of vanity which always miss their aim. He valued himself on every thing, and was good at nothing: he took the lead in conversation, demanded silence, suspended the attention, and then brought out the flattest speech in the world. He laughed before he told a story, but no one else laughed at his stories; he often aimed at being refined, and gave such fine turns to what he said, that at last he did not know what he was saying: when he had given ladies the vapours, he thought he had made them pensive: when they were diverting themselves with his follies, he took it for coquetry.'—'Ah, madam, what a happy temper!'—'Our first interviews were filled with the recital of his intrigues.

I began by listening to him with impatience; I ended by hearing him with disgust: I even took the liberty of declaring to my parents that the creature tired me to death. They replied, that I was a simpleton; for that a husband was formed to do so. I married him. They made me promise to love him alone: my mouth said *Yes*, my heart said *No*; and my heart kept its promise. The Count of Palmene presented himself before me with all the graces of mind and figure. My husband, who introduced him, did the honours of my modesty: he replied to the handsome things the count said on his happiness, with an air of superiority that made me mad. If you would believe him, I loved him to distraction; and this declaration was succeeded by all that indiscreet disclosure of secrets, no less shocking to truth than decorum, while vanity abuses the silence of modesty. I was not able to contain myself; I quitted the room, and Palmene could perceive by my disgust that the marquis imposed upon him. 'The impertinent creature,' said I to myself; 'he goes on boasting of his triumphs, because he is persuaded I shall not have the courage to contradict him. They will believe him; they will suppose me tasteless enough to love the silliest and vainest man in the world. If he had spoke of an honest attachment to my duty, I could have borne it; but to talk of love! of a weakness for him! this is enough to bring a disgrace on me. No, I would not have it said in the world, that I am fond of my husband! It is of the highest consequence that I should undeceive Palmene; and with him I ought to begin.'

'My husband, who congratulated himself on having put me out of countenance, did not discover, any better than myself, the true cause of my confusion and anger. He valued himself too much, and loved me too little, to condescend to be jealous. 'You have behaved like a child,' said he to me, when the count was gone: 'I can tell you,

however, that he thinks you charming. Yet do not listen too much to him, he is a dangerous man.' I felt it much better than he could tell me.

'Next day the Count de Palmene came to see me; he found me alone. 'Do you forgive me, madam,' said he, 'for the confusion I saw you in yesterday? I was the innocent cause of it; but I could freely have dispensed with the marquis's making me his confidant.'—'I know not,' said I to him, looking down, 'why he takes so much pleasure in relating what it gives me so much pain to hear.'—'When we are so happy, madam, we are very pardonable in being indiscreet.'—'If he is happy, I congratulate him; but indeed he has no reason.'—'What! can he be otherwise,' replied the count with a sigh, 'when he possesses the most beautiful woman in the world?'—'Suppose, sir, suppose for once that I am so; where is the glory, the merit, the happiness of possessing me? Did I dispose of myself?'—'No, madam; but if I may believe him, you soon applauded the choice they had made for you.'—'What, sir! will the men never consider that they train us up to dissimulation from our infancy; that we lose our frankness with our liberty; and that it is no longer the time to require of us to be sincere, when they have imposed it as a duty on us to be otherwise?' Here I was a little too much so myself, and perceived it too late: hope had now insinuated itself into the count's soul. To confess that one does not love one's husband is almost to confess that we love another, and the person who is made the confidant of such confession is very often the object of it.

'These ideas had plunged the count into a pleasing reverie. 'You have dissembled, then, mighty well,' said he, after a long silence; 'for the marquis has told me astonishing things of your mutual love.'—'Very well, sir; let him flatter himself as much as he pleases: I shall not try to undeceive him.'—'But for yourself, madam; ought

you to be unhappy ?'—'I do my duty; I submit to my destiny: question me no more about it; and above all, make no ill use of the secret which the imprudence of my husband, my own natural sincerity, and my impatience, have forced from me.' —'I, madam! may I die sooner than be unworthy your confidence: but I would enjoy it alone, and without reserve: look upon me as a friend who shares all your disquiets, and in whose breast you may safely deposit them.'

'This name of *friend* infused into my heart a perfidious tranquillity: I no longer mistrusted either myself or him. A friend of twenty-four hours, of the count's age and figure, appeared to me the most reasonable, as well as the most decent thing in the world; and a husband such as mine, the thing of all the world the most ridiculous and afflicting.

'The latter obtained no longer, from the duty I owed him, any more than a few cold civilities; of which, however, he had still the folly to pride himself, and was always mentioning them in confidence to Palmene, and at the same time exaggerating their value. The count knew not what to think of it. 'Why deceive me?' said he sometimes. 'Why disown a commendable sensibility? Are you ashamed to contradict yourself?'—'Alas! no, sir! I could glory in it; but I am not happy enough to have occasion to retract.'

'At these words my eyes were filled with tears. Palmene was melted by them. What did he not say to me to soften my sorrows! What pleasure did I take in hearing him! O, my dear abbé! the dangerous comforter! He assumed from that moment an absolute empire over my soul; and of all my thoughts, my love for him was the only one I concealed from him. He had never spoke to me of his own passion but under the title of friendship; but making an ill use at last of the ascendant he had over me, he writ to me as follows: 'I have

deceived myself, and imposed upon you: that friendship, so calm and so sweet, to which I resigned myself without fear, is become love, the most violent, the most passionate that ever existed. I shall see you this evening, to devote my life to you, or to bid you an eternal farewell.'

'I shall not explain to you, my dear abbé, the different emotions that arose in my soul: all I know is, that virtue, love, and fear strove there together; but I remember, too, that joy had its part. I endeavoured, however, to prepare myself for making a good defence. First, I thought I would not be alone, and I would go and tell them to let in all the world. Secondly, I resolved I would look at him but very slightly, without giving his eyes an opportunity to fix themselves for one moment on mine. This effort will cost me dear; but virtue is not virtue for nothing. In short, I will avoid giving him an opportunity of speaking to me in particular: and if he should dare to attempt it, I will answer him in a tone, in such a tone as shall deceive him.

'My resolution being taken, I sat down to my toilette, and, without intending it, dressed myself that day with more grace and elegance than ever. In the evening a prodigious deal of company came to see me, and this company put me out of humour. My husband also, more earnest and assiduous than usual, as if he had done it on purpose, harassed me almost to death. At length they announced Palmene. He blushed, he paid his respects to me. I received him with a profound curtesy, without deigning to raise my eyes towards him, and said to myself, 'Well, this is very fine!' The conversation at first was general: Palmene let drop some words, which to the rest of the company carried very little meaning, but signified a great deal to me. I pretended not to understand them, and applauded myself in my own mind for so well-supported a rigour. Palmene had not the courage

to approach me; my husband forced him to it by his familiar pleasantries. The count's respect and timidity softened me. 'The poor wretch,' said I, 'is more to be pitied than blamed; if he dared, he would ask pardon of me; but he will never have the courage. I will cheer him by a look.' —'I have been guilty of an indiscretion, madam,' said he to me: 'do you pardon me for it?'—'No, sir.' This *No*, pronounced I know not how, appeared to me very great. Palmene got up, as it were to go: my husband retained him by force. Word was brought that supper was on table. 'Come, my dear count, be gallant; give my wife your hand: she seems to me to be rather in ill-humour; but we shall contrive to drive it away.'

'Palmene, in despair, squeezed my hand; I looked at him, and thought I saw in his eyes the image of love and grief. I was touched with it, my dear abbé; and by a movement which proceeded from my heart, my hand replied to his. I cannot describe to you the change which appeared all of a sudden on his countenance. It sparkled with joy, and that joy diffused itself into the souls of all the company. Love, and the desire of pleasing, seemed to animate them all, as well as himself.

'The discourse turned upon gallantry. My husband, who thought himself an Ovid in the art of love, delivered a thousand impertinencies on the subject. The count, in his answers, endeavoured to soften them with a delicacy and ingenuity that quite charmed me. *By good luck*, a young fop, who had seated himself by me, took it into his head to say handsome things to me. *By good luck*, also, I paid some attention to him, and answered him with an air of satisfaction. The amiable Palmene now changed of a sudden both his language and temper. The conversation had passed from love to coquetry. The count inveighed against that general desire of pleasing, with a warmth and gravity that astonished me. 'I forgive,' said he,

'a woman for changing her lover; I can even pardon her having several: all this is natural: it is not her fault if they cannot fix her: at least, if she seeks to captivate only those she loves, and whom she makes happy, and if she contributes at one time to the happiness of two or three, it is only a blessing multiplied. But a coquette is a tyrant that wants to enslave all, merely for the pleasure of having slaves. Idolatress of herself, she cares for nobody else: her pride makes a sport of our weakness, and a triumph of our torments: her looks are false, her mouth deceitful, her language and her behaviour are only a series of snares, her graces so many sirens, her charms so many poisons.'

'This declamation astonished all present. 'What, sir!' said the young gentleman to him, who had talked to me, 'do you prefer a woman of gallantry to a coquette?'—'Yes, without doubt do I, and it is beyond all dispute.'—'Such a one is more convenient,' said I. to him ironically. 'And more estimable, madam,' replied he, with an air of chagrin, 'more estimable a thousand times.' I confess that I was piqued at this insult. 'Come, sir!' replied I with disdain, 'it is to no purpose that you reproach us, as with a crime, of one of the most innocent and most natural pleasures in the world; your opinion will not be a law. The coquettes, you say, are tyrants: you are a much greater tyrant yourself, for wanting to deprive us of the only advantage that nature has given us. If we must give up the desire of pleasing, what have we left in society? Talents, genius, the striking virtues, all these you have, or think you have: it is permitted a woman only to attempt to be amiable; and yet you most cruelly condemn her never to wish to be so, except to one man. This is to bury her alive amidst the living; this is to render the whole world nothing to her.'—'Ah, madam!' said the count to me in a pet, 'you are in the way of the world! Indeed I could not have believed it.'—

'You are wrong, my dear,' replied my husband, 'you are wrong: my wife would please every body, but desires to make none happy but me. That is cruel, I confess, and I have told her so a hundred times; but it is her foible: so much the worse for the dupes! Besides, why take so seriously what is but a jest? If she takes a pleasure in hearing herself called handsome, must she for that reason reply in the same strain? She loves me, that is plain; but you, and as many others as amuse her, ye have no pretensions to her heart. She keeps that for me, and I defy any body to rob me of it.' —'You shut my mouth,' said Palmene, 'the moment you cite your lady for an example, and I have nothing to say in reply.' At these words they went out from table.

'I conceived from that instant, I will not say an aversion for the count, but a dread which almost comes up to it. 'What a strange man!' said I to myself; 'what an imperious disposition! He would make a woman miserable.' After supper he fell into a sullen silence, from which nothing could rouse him. At last, finding me for a moment alone, 'Do you really think as you spoke?' demanded he, with the air of a severe judge. 'Certainly.'—'Enough: you shall never see me more as long as I live.'

'*By good luck* he kept his word with me, and I perceived, by the chagrin which this rapture gave me, all the danger I had run. 'See,' said the abbé, moralizing very gravely, 'what one moment of ill-humour produces. A trifle becomes a serious affair; we are exasperated, humbled; love is terrified, and flies.'

'The character of the Chevalier de Luzel,' resumed the marchioness, 'was quite the reverse of that of the Count de Palmene.'—'This gentleman, madam, was without doubt the person who was so sweet upon you during supper?'—'Yes, my dear abbé, the same. He was beautiful as Narcissus;

and he loved himself no less: he had vivacity, and a gentility in his understanding, but not the shadow of common sense.

'' Ah! marchioness,' said he to me, 'this Palmene of yours is a melancholy creature! What do you do with the man? He talks, he moralizes, he overwhelms us with his arguments. For my own part, I know but two things: to amuse myself, and to be amusing to others. I know the world I live in; I see what passes there: I see that the greatest of evils that afflict mankind is dulness. Now this dulness proceeds from an evenness in the temper, a constancy in our connexions, a solidity in our tastes, a monotony, in short, which gives a sleepiness even to pleasure itself; while levity, caprice, coquetry, keep it awake. Besides, I love coquettes to distraction: coquetry is the charm of society. Besides, sensible women are tiresome in the long-run. It is a good thing to have somebody with whom you may unbend.'—'With me,' said I to him, smiling, 'you may unbend as much as you please.'—'And that now is what I want, what I seek in a coquette; to oppose, to resist, to defend herself, if possible. Yes, madam, I would fly you, if I thought you capable of a serious attachment.' —'Madam,' replied the abbé gravely, 'this young fop was a dangerous person.'—'I assure you, my good friend, he was, and I was not long before I perceived it. I treated him at first as a child, and this ascendancy of my understanding over his could not but be very flattering at my time of life; but he might be taken from me by somebody. I began to grow uneasy at it. His absence put me out of humour, his connexions raised my jealousy. I demanded sacrifices, and wanted to impose laws.

'Well now,' said he to me one day, when I was reproaching him for his dissipation, 'would you work a little miracle? Make me discreet at once: I ask nothing better.' I understood very well, that to make him discreet, there was a necessity

for ceasing to be so myself. I asked him, however, on what this little miracle depended. 'On a trifle,' said he: 'we seem to me to love one another already; the rest is easily imagined.'—'If we love one another, as you say, but which I do not believe, the miracle would be already performed; love alone would have rendered you discreet.'—'Oh! no, madam, we must be just: I willingly abandon all other hearts for yours; win or lose, it is the chance of the game, and I wish to run the hazard of it; but yet there is an exchange to make, and you cannot in conscience desire that I should renounce all pleasure for nothing.'—'Madam,' interrupted the abbé, 'the chevalier was not so void of sense as you say, and here he reasoned pretty well.'—'I was astonished,' said the marchioness; 'but the more I perceived he was in the right, the more I endeavoured to persuade him that he was wrong. I even told him, as far as I can remember, some of the finest things in the world on honour, duty, and conjugal fidelity: but he paid no regard to them; he pretended that honour was only a decorum, marriage a ceremony, and the oath of fidelity a compliment, a piece of politeness, which in reality bound us to nothing. So much was said on one side and the other, that we began to lose ourselves in our ideas, when on a sudden my husband arrived.'

'*By good luck*, madam!'—'Oh! by great good luck, I confess: never did husband come more opportunely. We were confused; my blushes would have betrayed me, and, for want of time to recollect myself, I said to the chevalier, *hide yourself*. He retired into the closet of my dressing-room.'—'A dangerous retreat, madam!'—'It was so; but this closet had a back-door, and I was easy about the chevalier's escape.'—'Madam,' said the abbé, with his air of reflection, 'I would lay a wager that the chevalier is still in the closet.'—'Patience,' replied the marchioness; 'we are not

come to the unravelling of the plot. My husband accosted me with that air of self-content which appeared always on his countenance; and I, in order to conceal my embarrassment from him, ran up hastily to embrace him with an exclamation of surprise and joy. 'So, you little fool,' said he to me; 'there, now, I suppose you are pleased! you see me again. I am very good to come and pass the evening with this poor thing. You are not ashamed then to love your husband? But do you know that it is ridiculous, and that they say that they must bury us together, or that I must be banished from you; that you are good for nothing, ever since you have been my wife; that you drive all your lovers into despair, and that you ought to be punished for it!'—'I, sir! I drive nobody into despair.—Do not you know me? I am one of the best natured women in the world.'—'What an air of simplicity! One would believe it. Thus, for example, Palmene ought to take it for granted that you have not played the coquette with him: the chevalier ought to be content that you prefer your husband to him; and what a husband too! A dull, insipid fellow, who has not even common sense: is it not so? What a contrast to an elegant chevalier!'—'Indeed I form no comparison between you.'—'The chevalier has wit, vivacity, and grace. How do I know but he has the gift of tears also? Has he never wept at your knees? You blush! That is almost a confession. Out with it; tell me.'—'Have done,' said I to him, 'or I'll leave the room.'—'What! do not you see that I am joking?'—'Such joking would deserve . . . .'—'How now! what, angry! You threaten me too! You may, but I shall not be at all alarmed.'—'You take advantage of my virtue.'—'Of your virtue? Oh, not at all: I depend only on my own planet, which will not suffer me to be made a fool of!'—'And you trust to your planet?'—'I trust so strongly in it, I depend so thoroughly upon it, that I defy you to

counteract it. Hark ye, child, I have known women without number; and not one, whatever I did, could bring herself to be untrue to me. Ah! I may say without vanity, that when they love me, they love me heartily. Not that I am better than any other; I do not flatter myself so far as that; but there is a certain *je ne scai quoi*, as Moliere says, which cannot be explained.' At these words, surveying himself with his eyes, he walked before a glass. 'You see too,' continued he, 'how little restraint I put upon you. For example, to-night have you any appointment, any *tête-à-tête?* I take my leave. It is merely on a supposition that you are disengaged, that I come to pass the evening with you.'—'However that be,' said I to him, 'you had better stay.'—'For the greater surety, is it not so?'—'Perhaps so.'—'I thank you: I see I must sup with you.'—'Sup then quickly,' interrupted the abbé, 'the marquis makes me impatient: I am in pain till you get up from the table, till you are retired into your own apartment, and your husband leaves you there.'—'Well, my dear abbé, behold me there, in the most cruel anxiety I ever experienced in my life. My soul struggling (I blush at it yet) between fear and desire, I advance with a trembling pace towards the closet of my dressing-room, to see at last if my fears have any foundation: I perceive nobody there; I think him gone, this perfidious chevalier; but, *by good luck*, I hear somebody speaking in a low voice in the next room: I draw near, I listen: it was Luzel himself, with the youngest of my women. 'It is true,' said he, 'I came here with a design upon the marchioness, but chance uses me better than love. What a comparison! and how unjust is fortune! Your mistress is well enough; but has she that shape, that air of neatness, that bloom, that gentility? You are, by nature, a woman of quality. A woman must either be very modest, or very vain, to have an attendant of your age and figure! Faith,

Lucy, if the Graces are made like you, Venus cannot shine much at her toilette.'—'Keep your gallantries, sir, for my lady, and remember that she will be here presently.'—'Oh, no, she is with her husband; they are the best in the world together. I even think, God forgive me! that I hear them saying tender things to each other. It would be pleasant if he could come to pass the night with her. But however that be, she does not know that I am here, and from this moment I am no longer for her.'—'But, sir, you do not consider; what will become of me if they should know it?'—'Take courage; I have provided for every thing: if to-morrow they should see me go out, it is easy to give it a proper turn.'—'But, sir, my lady's honour . . . .'—'Stuff: your lady's honour is mightily concerned in it! And, after all, if they should give her such a man as myself, so much the better; that would bring her into fashion.'—'Oh! the wretch,' cried the abbé.—'Judge, my friend,' resumed the marchioness, 'my indignation at this discourse. I was on the point of bursting out upon them; but such a burst of passion would have ruined me: neither my people nor my husband would have been able to persuade themselves that the chevalier came there on Lucy's account. I resolved to dissemble: I rang; Lucy appeared: I had never seen her look so handsome before; for jealousy embellishes its object, when it cannot make it ugly. 'Was that one of your master's servants,' said I to her, 'whom I just now heard talking with you?'—'Yes, madam,' replied she with confusion. —'Let him withdraw this instant, and do not come back till he is gone.' I said no more: but whether Lucy saw through me, or fear determined her to send away the chevalier, he retired that instant, and got out undiscovered. You may easily judge, my dear abbé, that my door was ever after shut against him, and that Lucy, the next day, dressed my head ill, did every thing wrong,

was good for nothing, put me quite out of patience, and was discharged.'

'You had reason, madam,' cried the abbé, 'to say that your virtue has run some risks.'—'This is not all,' continued she; 'I shall now entertain you with another adventure. We passed the summer every year at our country-house at Corbeil, where we had a celebrated painter for our neighbour, which inspired the marquis with a gallant notion of having my portrait and his own. You know that it was his foible to believe himself beloved by me. He would have us represented in the same piece, chained together by Hymen with wreaths of flowers. The painter took the hint; but being accustomed to draw after nature, he desired to have a model for the figure of Hymen. In the same village was at that time a young abbé, who now and then came to see us. His fine eyes, his rosy mouth, his complexion scarce yet shaded with the down of youth, his hair of a bright flaxen colour, flowing in small ringlets on a neck whiter than ivory, the tender vivacity of his looks, the delicacy and regularity of his features, every thing about him seemed so formed for the purpose, that the marquis prevailed on the abbé to consent to serve as a model to the painter.'

At this beginning, the Abbé de Châteauneuf redoubled his attention; but contained himself till the end, in order to hear the conclusion of the story.

'The expression to be given to the countenances,' continued the marchioness, 'produced excellent scenes between the painter and the marquis. The more my husband endeavoured to put on an air of sensibility, the more simple he looked. The painter copied faithfully, and the marquis was enraged at seeing himself painted to the life. For my part, I had a something of mockery in my countenance, which the painter imitated as well. The marquis swore; the artist retouched without ceasing; but

he still found on the canvas the air of a sly baggage and a fool. At last a dulness seized me: the marquis took it for a soft languor: on his side he gave himself a foolish laugh, which he called a tender smile, and the painter came off for drawing him as he saw him. We were to proceed next to the figure of Hymen. 'Come, sir,' said the painter to the abbé, 'now for the Graces, and voluptuousness! Look tenderly on the lady; still more tenderly.'—'Take her hand,' added my husband, 'and imagine that you are saying to her, Fear not, my dear; these bands are made of flowers; strong, but light. Animate yourself, then, my dear abbé: your countenance has no expression in it: you have the air of an Hymen benumbed.' The young man profited wonderfully by the instructions of the painter and the marquis. His timidity vanished by degrees, his mouth wore an amorous smile, his complexion was heightened with a livelier red; his eyes sparkled with a gentler flame, and his hand pressed mine with a tremor, which myself only could perceive. I must tell you all; the emotion of his soul passed into mine, and I viewed the god with much more tenderness than I had done my spouse. 'There! the very thing!' said the marquis: 'go on, abbé; admirable! Is not it?' said he to the painter. 'We shall make something of this little model. Come, wife, do not let us be cast down: I knew very well that it would be a fine piece. There, you are now just as I wanted: courage, abbé: go on, madam; I leave you both in the right attitude. Do not change it till I return.' As soon as the marquis was gone, my little abbé became quite heavenly; my eyes devoured his, and yet I could not be satisfied. The sittings were long, and seemed to us to last only for a moment. 'What a pity,' said the painter, 'that I did not take my lady at such a juncture as this! There is the expression I wished for! quite another countenance. Ah, sir! what a pleasure it is to

copy you! You do not flag at all: your features become more and more animated. No inattention, madam; fix your eyes on his; my Hymen will be a capital figure.' When the head of the Hymen was finished, 'I want, madam,' said he to me one day, in my husband's absence, 'I want to retouch your portrait. Change places, abbé, and take that of the marquis.'—'Why so, sir?' said I, blushing. 'Oh! heavens! madam, let me alone. I know best what will set you off to advantage.' I understood him, and the abbé blushed at it, as well as myself. The artifice of the painter had a wonderful effect. The languor gave place to the most touching expression of timid voluptuousness. The marquis, at his return, could not cease admiring this change, which he could not comprehend. 'This is very strange!' said he: 'it looks as if the picture had animated itself.'—'It is the effect of my colours,' replied the painter coldly, 'to display themselves thus in proportion as they take place. You will see it quite a different thing in a short time from what it is now.'—'But my head,' resumed the marquis, 'to me does not seem to improve so.'—'That is easily accounted for,' replied the artist: 'the lineaments are stronger, and the colours less delicate. But do not be impatient: it will become, in time, one of the finest husband's heads that ever was seen.'

'When the picture was finished, the abbé and myself fell into a profound melancholy. Those soft moments in which our souls spoke through our eyes, and shot themselves into one another, were now no more. His timidity and my modesty laid us under a cruel restraint. He no longer dared to visit us so often, and I no longer dared to invite him.

'In short, one day, when he happened to be at our house, I found him alone, motionless and pensive, before the picture. 'You are well employed, sir,' said I to him.—'Yes, madam,' re-

plied he briskly: 'I am enjoying the only pleasure that will henceforth be permitted me: I am admiring yourself in your picture.'—'You are admiring me? That is very gallant!'—'Ah! I would say more if I durst.'—'Indeed! You are content?'—'Content, madam! I am enchanted. Alas! why are you not still such as I see you in this picture?'—'It is pretty well,' interrupted I, pretending not to understand him; 'but yours appears to me to be better.'—'Better, madam? Mine is as cold as ice.'—'You joke about your coldness: nothing in the world can be more warm.'—'Ah, madam! had I but been at liberty to suffer that emotion to display itself in my countenance which passed in my heart, you should have seen quite another thing. But how could I express what I felt in those moments? The painter, if not the marquis, had his eyes continually upon me. I was obliged to assume a tranquil air. Would you see,' added he, 'how I should have viewed you, if we had been without witnesses? Give me once more that hand which I pressed not without trembling, and let us resume the same attitude.' Would you believe it, my friend? I had the curiosity, the complaisance, and, if you please, the weakness, to let my hand drop into his. I must confess, I never saw any thing so tender, so passionate, so touching, as the figure of my little abbé at this dangerous conference. Voluptuousness smiled on his lips, desire sparkled in his eyes, and all the flowers of the spring seemed to blow on his beautiful cheeks. He pressed my hand against his heart, and I felt it beat with a vivacity that communicated itself to mine. 'Yes,' said I, endeavouring to dissemble my confusion, 'that would be more expressive, I confess; but it would no longer be the figure of Hymen.'—'No, madam, no, it would be that of Love; but Hymen at your feet ought to be no other than Love himself.' At these words he

seemed to forget himself, and thought himself in reality the god whose image he represented.

'*By good luck* I had still strength enough left to be in a passion: the poor creature, shocked and confounded, took my emotion for anger, and lost, in asking my pardon, the most favourable moment to offend me with impunity. 'Ah! madam,' cried the Abbé de Châteauneuf, 'is it possible that I have been such a fool?'—'How now?' resumed the marchioness. 'Alas! this little fool was I!'—'You! impossible!'—''Twas I, I myself; nothing more certain. You recal my own story to my remembrance. Cruel woman! had I known but what I know now!'—'My old friend, you would have had too great an advantage; and this prudence which you now extol so highly, would have made but a feeble resistance.'—'I am confounded,' cried the abbé; 'I shall never forgive myself as long as I live.'—'Console yourself, for it is time,' replied the marchioness smiling: 'but confess that there is a great deal of *good luck* in virtue itself, and that those ladies who have the most, ought to judge less severely of them who have not had enough.'

THE

TWO UNFORTUNATE LADIES.

In the convent of the visitation of Cl . . . had for some short time retired the Marchioness of Clarence. The calm and serenity which she saw reign in this solitude did but render more lively and bitter the grief that consumed her. 'How happy,' said she, 'are those innocent doves, which have taken their flight towards heaven! Life is to them a cloudless day; they know neither the sorrows nor pleasures of the world.'

Amidst these pious maidens, whose happiness she envied, one only, named Lucilia, seemed to her to be pensive and pining. Lucilia, still in the bloom of her youth, had that style of beauty which is the image of a sensible heart; but sorrow and tears had taken off its freshness, like a rose which the sun has withered, but which leaves us still capable of judging, in its languishing state, of all the beauty it had in the morning. There seems to be a dumb language between tender souls. The marchioness read in the eyes of this afflicted fair one what nobody had discovered there before. So natural is it to the unhappy to complain, and love their partners in affliction! She took a liking to Lucilia. Friendship, which in the world is hardly a sentiment, in the cloister is a passion. Their connexion in a short time became very intimate; but on both sides a concealed sorrow poisoned its sweetness. They were sometimes a whole hour sighing together, without presuming to ask each other the secret of their griefs. The marchioness at last broke the silence.

'A mutual confession,' said she, 'would spare us

perhaps a great deal of uneasiness: we stifle our sighs on both sides; ought friendship to keep any thing a secret from the breast where a mutual friendship is found?' At these words a modest blush animated the features of Lucilia, and the veil of her eyelids dropped over her fine eyes. 'Ah! why,' replied the marchioness, 'why this blush? Is it the effect of shame? It is thus that the thought of happiness ought to colour beauty. Speak, my Lucilia; pour out your heart into the bosom of a friend, more, without doubt, to be lamented than yourself, but who would console herself for her own unhappiness, if she could but soften yours.'—'What is it you ask of me, madam? I share all your sorrows, but I have none of my own to confide to you. The alteration of my health is the only cause of that languor into which you see me plunged. I am decaying insensibly, and, thanks to Heaven! my end approaches.' She spoke these last words with a smile, at which the marchioness was greatly affected. 'Is that, then,' said she, 'your only consolation? Yet, though impatient to die, you will not confess to me what it is that renders life odious to you. How long have you been here?'—'Five years, madam.'—'Was you brought hither by compulsion?'—'No, madam, by reason, by Heaven, which was pleased to attract my heart entirely to itself.'—'That heart, then, was attached to the world?'—'Alas! yes, for its own punishment.'—'Finish.'—'I have told you all.'—'Were you in love, Lucilia, and had the fortitude to bury yourself alive? Was it some perfidious wretch whom you have abandoned?'—'The most virtuous, most tender, and most valuable of mankind. Ask no more: you see the guilty tears that steal from my eyes; the wounds of my heart open afresh at the thought.'—'No, my dear Lucilia, it is not a time for us now to keep any thing a secret. I would penetrate into the inmost recesses of your soul, in order to

pour consolation into it: believe me, the poison of grief exhales not but by complaints; shut up in silence, it only becomes the more violent.'—'You will have it, madam? Weep, then, over the unfortunate Lucilia; weep over her life, and shortly over her death.

'Scarce had I appeared in the world, when this fatal beauty attracted the eyes of a fickle and imprudent youth, whose homage could not dazzle me. One man alone, yet in the age of innocence and candour, taught me that I was sensible of love. The equality of our years, birth, fortune, the connexion also between our families, and, above all, a mutual inclination, had united us to each other. My lover lived only for me: we saw with pity this immense void of the world, where pleasure is only a shadow, where love is but a gleam: our hearts full of themselves .... But I lose myself. Ah madam, what do you now oblige me to call to mind!'—'What, my dear, do you reproach yourself for having been just? When heaven has formed two virtuous and sensible hearts, does it make it criminal in them to seek each other, to attract, to captivate reciprocally? If so, why has it made them?'—'It formed, no doubt, with pleasure that heart in which mine lost itself; where virtue took place of reason, and where I saw nothing that was a reproach to nature. Oh, madam! who was ever loved liked me! Would you believe that I was obliged to spare my lover's delicacy even the confession of those tender inquietudes which sometimes afflict love? He would have deprived himself of life, if Lucilia had been jealous of it. When he perceived in my eyes any mark of sorrow, it was to him as if all nature had been eclipsed: he supposed himself always the cause, and reproached himself for all my faults.

'It is but too easy to judge to what excess the most amiable of men must have been loved. In-

terest, which dissolves all ties except those of love, interest disunited our families; a fatal lawsuit commenced against my mother was to us the era and source of our misfortunes. The mutual hatred of our friends raised itself an eternal barrier between us: we were obliged to give over seeing each other. The letter which he wrote me will never be effaced out of my memory:—

"EVERY thing is lost to me, my dear Lucilia: they tear from me my only happiness. I am just come from throwing myself at my father's feet; I am just come from conjuring him, bathing him at the same time with my tears, to give over this fatal lawsuit:—he received me as a child. I protested to him that your fortune was sacred to me, that my own would become odious:—he has treated my disinterestedness as a folly. Mankind conceive not that there is something above riches: and yet what should I do with wealth if I lose you? They say that one day I shall be glad they did not listen to me. If I believed that age, or what they call reason, could so far debase my soul, I should cease to live from this moment, terrified at what was to come. No, my dear Lucilia, no; all I have or ask is yours. The laws would in vain give me a part of your inheritance; my laws are in my heart, and my father there stands condemned. A thousand pardons for the uneasiness he occasions you. Pray God that I offer up no criminal wishes! I could cut off from my own days to add to my father's; but if ever I am master of those riches he is now accumulating, and with which he would overload me in spite of myself, ample reparation shall be made for all. But yet I am deprived of you. They will dispose, perhaps, of the heart which you have given me. Ah! beware of ever consenting to it: think that my life is at stake, think that our oaths are written in heaven. But

can you withstand the imperious will of a mother? I shudder at the thought: speak comfort to me, in the name of the most tender love.''

'You answered him, without doubt?'—'Yes, madam, but in very few words:—

''I UPBRAID you with nothing. I am unhappy, but I know how to be so: learn from me to suffer.'

'The lawsuit however was begun, and carried on with heat. One day, alas! one terrible day, while my mother was reading with indignation a memorial published against her, somebody asked to speak with me. 'Who is it?' said she; 'let them come in.' The servant, confounded, hesitates for some time, stammers in his answers, and concludes by confessing that he was charged with a billet to me. 'For my daughter! from whom?' I was present; judge of my situation; judge of the indignation of my mother, when she heard the name of the son of the person whom she called her persecutor. If she had vouchsafed to read the billet which she sent back without opening, perhaps she had been moved by it. She would have seen at least the extreme purity of our sentiments; but whether the vexation into which this lawsuit had plunged her required only an opportunity to vent itself, or that a secret correspondence between her daughter and her enemies was in her eyes a real crime, there are no reproaches with which I was not loaded. I fell down confounded at my mother's feet, and submitted to the humiliation of her upbraidings, as if I had deserved them. It was determined on the spot that I should go and conceal in a cloister what she called my shame and her own. Being brought here the day after, orders were given not to suffer me to see any body; and I was here three whole months, as if my family

and the world had been entirely annihilated to me. The first and only visit I received was my mother's: I presaged from her embraces the sentence she was going to pronounce. 'I am ruined,' said she to me, as soon as we were alone; 'iniquity has prevailed: I have lost my lawsuit, and with it all means of establishing you in the world. Scarce enough remains for my son to support himself according to his birth. As to you, my daughter, God has called you here; here you must live and die: to-morrow you take the veil.' At these words, which were strengthened by the cold and absolute tone in which they were pronounced, my heart was struck, and my tongue frozen; my knees gave way beneath me, and I fell senseless on the ground. My mother called for assistance, and laid hold of that opportunity to withdraw herself from my tears. When I was come to myself again, I found myself surrounded with those pious damsels, whose companion I was to be, and who invited me to partake with them the sweet tranquillity of their condition. But that state, so fortunate for an innocent and disengaged soul, presented to my eyes nothing but struggles, perjuries, and remorse. A dreadful abyss was going to be opened betwixt my lover and me; I found my better part torn from me; I saw no longer any thing around me but silence and vacuity; and in this immense solitude, in this renunciation of all nature, I found myself in the presence of heaven, with my heart full of the lovely object, which it was necessary I should forget for its sake. These holy damsels told me, with the strongest conviction, all that they knew of the vanities of the world: but it was not to the world that I was attached: the most horrible desert would have seemed a ravishing abode, with the man whom I had left in that world which to me was nothing.

'I desired to see my mother again: she pretended at first to have taken my swooning for a

natural accident. 'No, madam, it is the effect of the violent situation into which you have thrown me; for it is no longer time to feign. You have given me life, you may take it from me; but, madam, have you conceived me only as a victim devoted to the torment of a lingering death? And to whom is it you sacrifice me? Not to God. I feel that he rejects me: the Almighty demands only pure victims, voluntary sacrifices; he is jealous of the offerings made him, and the heart which presents itself to him ought thenceforward to be his alone. If violence drags me to the altar, perjury and sacrilege attend me there.'—'What say you, wretched girl?'—'A terrible truth, which despair forces from me: yes, madam, my heart has given itself away without your consent; innocent or culpable, it is no longer mine: God only can break the band by which it is tied.'—'Go, unworthy daughter, go and ruin yourself: I will never acknowledge you more.'—'Dear mother, by your own blood, abandon me not; see my tears, my despair; see hell open at my feet.'—'Is it in this light, then, that a fatal passion makes thee view the asylum of honour, the tranquil port of innocence? What is there, then, but the world in thy eyes? Know, however, that this world has but one idol, interest. All our homages are for the successful: oblivion, desertion, and contempt, are the portion of the unfortunate.'

'Ah, madam! separate from that corrupt multitude the man . . . .'—'Whom you love, is it not so? I know all that he can have said to you.'—'He is no accomplice in the iniquity of his father; he disclaims it, he complains to you of it; he will repair the injury done you.'—'Vain promises; the fine speeches of a young man, which will be forgot to-morrow. But were he constant in his passion, and faithful in his promises, his father is young; he will grow old, for the wicked grow old; and in the mean time love becomes extinct, ambition

prompts, duty commands: rank, alliance, fortune, present themselves to him, and the credulous, beguiled maid, becomes the public talk. Such is the lot that awaited you: your mother has preserved you from it. I now cost you some tears, but you will one day bless me for it. I leave you, my daughter: prepare yourself for the sacrifice which God requires of you. The more painful this sacrifice, the more worthy will it be of him.'

'In a word, madam, I was obliged to resolve. I took this veil, this bandage; I entered the path of penitence; and during the time of probation, in which we are yet free, I flattered myself with the hopes of subduing myself, and attributed my irresolution and weakness solely to the fatal liberty of having it in my power to return. I thought the time long till I could bind myself by an irrevocable oath. I took that oath: I renounced the world: an easy matter. But, alas! I renounced also my lover, and that was more than renouncing my life. On pronouncing those vows, my soul fluttered on my lips, as if ready to leave me. Scarce had I strength enough to drag me to the foot of the altar: whence they were obliged to carry me away as dead. My mother came to me transported with a cruel joy. Pardon me, my God: I respect, I love her still; I will love her till my last gasp.' These words of Lucilia were interrupted by sighs, and two rivulets of tears overflowed her face.

'The sacrifice was now completed,' resumed she, after a long silence: 'I was the Almighty's, I was no longer my own. All sensual ties were now to be broken: I was become dead to the earth: I presumed to believe it. But what was my terror, on searching into the abyss of my own soul! I there still found love; but a frantic and criminal love; love covered with shame and despair; love rebelling against heaven, against nature, against myself; love consumed by regret, torn with remorse, and transformed into rage. What have I done! cried I to

myself a thousand times; what have I done! This adored man, whom I must see no more, presents himself to my imagination in all his charms. The happy knot which was to have made us one, all the moments of a delicious life, all the emotions of two hearts which death alone would have separated, presented themselves to my distracted soul. Ah, madam! how grievous was the image! There is nothing which I have not done in order to blot it from my memory. For these five years past have I by turns banished it from my sight, and seen it recur without ceasing. In vain do I sink myself in sleep, which only revives it in my mind; in vain do I abstract myself in solitude, where it awaits me: I find it at the foot of the altar, I bear it into the bosom of God himself. Mean time that God, who is the father of mercies, has at length taken pity on me. Time, reason, penance, have weakened the first shocks of this criminal passion: but a painful languor has succeeded. I feel myself dying every moment, and the thought that I am drawing near to my grave is my sole consolation.'

'Oh, my dear Lucilia!' cried the marchioness, after hearing her, 'which of us is most to be pitied! Love has been the cause of both your misfortunes and mine: but you loved the tenderest, the most faithful, the most grateful of men; and I the most perfidious, the most ungrateful, the most cruel. You devoted yourself to Heaven; I delivered myself up to a villain: your retreat was a triumph; mine is a reproach: people lament you, love you, and respect you; but me they revile and traduce.

'Of all lovers, the most passionate before marriage was the Marquis of Clarence. Young, amiable, seducing to the highest degree, he promised a most happy disposition. He seemed to possess all the virtues, as he really did all the graces. The docile ease of his temper received in so lively a manner the impression of virtuous sentiments, that they seemed as if they could never have been

effaced. It was too easy for him, alas! to inspire me with the passion which he had himself, or at least thought he had for me. All the conveniences which make great matches conspired with this mutual inclination, and my parents, who had seen it rising in my bosom, consented to crown it. Two years past in the tenderest union. Oh, Paris! Oh, theatre of vices! Oh, dreadful rock of love, innocence, and virtue! My husband, who till then had been but little conversant with those of his own age, and that merely to amuse himself, as he said, with their irregularities and follies, imbibed insensibly the poison of their example. The noisy preparation for their insipid meetings, the mysterious confidence of their adventures, the proud recitals of their empty pleasures, the commendations lavished on their worthless conquests, all excited his curiosity. The sweetness of an innocent and peaceful union had no longer the same charms for him. I had myself no other talents than those which a virtuous education bestows: I perceived that he required more in me. 'I am undone,' said I to myself; 'my heart is no longer a sufficient return for his.' Indeed, his attentions from that time were nothing more than complaisance: he no longer preferred those sweet conversations, those private interviews, so delicious to me, to the ebb and flow of a tumultuous society. He himself persuaded me to abandon myself to dissipation, only in order to authorise him to be abandoned. I became more pressing, and restrained him. I took the resolution of leaving him at liberty, that he might wish for me, and see me again with pleasure, after a comparison which I thought must be to my advantage; but young corrupters seized that soul, unfortunately too flexible; and from the instant he had steeped his lips in the poisoned cup, his intoxication was without remedy, and his wandering without return. I wanted to recal him; but it was too late. 'You destroy yourself, my dear,'

said I to him; 'and though it be dreadful to me to see a husband torn from me who formed all my delight, yet it is more for your sake than my own that I lament your error. You seek happiness where it is most assuredly not to be found. False delights, shameful pleasures, will never satisfy your soul. The art of seducing and deceiving is the whole of that worldly art that now charms you; your wife knows it not, and you know it no better than she: that infamous school is not formed for our hearts: yours suffers itself to be lost in its intoxication; but it will last only for a time: the illusion will vanish like a dream; you will return to me, and find me still the same; an indulgent and faithful love waits your return, and all will be forgotten. You will have neither reproach nor complaint to fear from me: happy if I can console you, for all the chagrins which you may have occasioned me! But you, who know the value of virtue, and have tasted of her charms; you, whom vice shall have plunged from one abyss into another; you, whom it shall dismiss perhaps with contempt, to conceal at home with your wife the languishing days of a premature old age, your heart withered with sadness, your soul a prey to cruel remorse, how will you reconcile yourself to yourself? How will you be able still to relish the pure pleasure of being beloved by me? Alas! my love itself will be your punishment. The more lively also and tender that love will be, the more humiliating will it be for you. It is this, my dear marquis, it is this that grieves and overpowers me. Cease to love me, if you please; I can forgive you, since I have ceased to be agreeable; but never render yourself unworthy of my tenderness, and contrive at least not to be obliged to blush before me.' Would you believe it, my dear Lucilia? a piece of raillery was all his answer. He told me that I talked like an angel, and that what I had said deserved to be

committed to writing. But seeing my eyes brimful of tears, 'Nay, do not play the child,' said he to me; 'I love you, you know it; suffer me to amuse myself, and be assured that nothing attaches me.'

'However, some officious friends failed not to inform me of every thing that could grieve and confound me. Alas! my husband himself in a short time desisted from keeping himself under any restraint, and even from flattering me.

'I shall not tell you, my dear Lucilia, the many marks of humiliation and disgust that I endured. Your griefs, in comparison of mine, would even appear light to you. Imagine, if possible, the situation of a virtuous and feeling soul, lively and delicate to excess, receiving ever day new outrages from the only object of its affection; still living for him alone, when he lives no longer for her, when he is not ashamed to live for objects devoted to contempt. I spare your delicacy the most horrible part of this picture.—Rejected, abandoned, sacrificed by my husband, I devoured my grief in silence; and if I afforded some profligate companies a topic of ridicule, a more just and compassionate public consoled me with its pity: and I enjoyed the sole good which his vice could not take from me, a spotless character. I have since lost that, my dear Lucia. The wickedness of the women, whom my example humbled, could not bear to see me irreproachable. They interpreted, according to their wishes, my solitude and apparent tranquillity: they ascribed to me as a lover the first man who had the impudence to conceive that he was well received by me. My husband, to whom my presence was a continual reproach, and who found himself not yet sufficiently at liberty, in order to rid himself of my importunate grief took the first pretext that was presented to him, and banished me to one of his country seats. Unknown to the world, far from the sight of my misfortunes, I at least enjoyed in solitude the liberty of indulging my grief: but the

cruel man caused it to be notified to me, that I might choose a convent; that his seat of Florival was sold, and that I must retire from thence.'—'Florival!' interrupted Lucilia, in a violent emotion. 'That was the place of my exile,' resumed the marchioness. 'Ah! madam, what name have you pronounced?'—'The name of my husband before he acquired the marquisate of Clarence.'—'What do I hear? Oh, Heaven! Oh, just Heaven! is it possible?' cried Lucilia, throwing herself upon the bosom of her friend. 'What is the matter? what troubles you? what sudden revolution? Lucilia, recover your senses.'—'How, madam! Is Florival then the perfidious wretch, the villain, who betrays and dishonours you?'—'Do you know him?'—'It is the man, madam, whom I adored, whom I have mourned for these five years past; the man who would have had my last sighs!'—'What say you?'—'It is he, madam; alas! what had been my lot!' At these words, Lucilia bowing her face to the ground, 'Oh, my God!' said she, 'Oh, my God! it was thou who stretchedst out thine hand towards me.' The marchioness was confounded, and unable to recover from her astonishment. 'Doubt it not,' said she to Lucilia, 'the designs of Heaven are visibly manifested upon us: it brings us together, inspires us with a mutual confidence, and opens our hearts to each other, as two sources of light and consolation. Well, my worthy and tender friend, let us endeavour to forget at once both our misfortunes and the person who occasioned them.'

From this time the tenderness and intimacy of their friendship increased to the highest degree: their solitude had pleasures known only to the unfortunate. But, in a little time, this calm was interrupted by the news of the danger which threatened the marquis. His dissipations cost him his life. At the point of death he asked for his virtuous wife. She tears herself from the arms of her for-

lorn companion; hastens to him; arrives; and finds him expiring. 'Oh you, whom I have so greatly and so cruelly injured,' said he to her on recollecting her, 'see the fruit of my irregularities; see the dreadful stroke which the hand of God has inflicted upon me. If I am yet worthy of your pity, raise up to Heaven your innocent voice, and lay my remorse before it.' The distracted wife would have thrown herself on his bosom. 'Stand off,' said he; 'I shudder at myself; my breath is the blast of death:' Adding, after a long silence, 'Do you know me again in this state to which my crimes have reduced me? Is this that pure soul that used to mix itself with thine? Is this that half of thyself? Is this that nuptial bed that received me when worthy of thee? Perfidious friends! detestable enchantress! come, see, and shudder. Oh, my soul! who will deliver thee from this hideous prison? Sir,' said he to his physician, 'have I yet long to live? My pains are intolerable. Leave me not, my generous friend; I should fall, but for thee, into the most dreadful despair ..... Cruel death, complete, complete the expiation of my life. There are no evils which I do not deserve; I have betrayed, dishonoured, basely persecuted innocence and virtue itself.'

The marchioness, in the agonies of grief, made every moment new efforts to throw herself on the bed, from which they endeavoured to remove her. At last the unhappy man expired, his eyes fixed upon her, and his voice died away in asking her pardon.

The only consolation the marchioness was capable of, arose from that religious confidence with which so good a death inspired her. 'He was,' said she, 'more weak than wicked, and more frail than culpable. The world led him astray by its pleasures. God brought him back again by afflictions. He has chastised, and pardons him. Yes, my husband, my dear Clarence,' cried she, 'now disencumbered

of the ties of blood and the world, thou awaitest me in the bosom of thy God.'

Her soul filled with these holy ideas, she went to join her friend, whom she found at the foot of the altar. Lucilia's heart was rent within her at the relation of this cruel and virtuous death. They wept together for the last time; and some time after, the marchioness consecrated to God, with the same vows as Lucilia, that heart, those charms, those virtues, of which the world was unworthy.

ALL OR NOTHING.

At that time of life, when it is so agreeable to be a widow, Cecilia could not help thinking of a fresh engagement. Two rivals disputed her choice. One, modest and plain, loved only her; the other, artful and vain, was above all things fond of himself. The first had the confidence of Cecilia; the second had her love. Cecilia was unjust, you will say: not at all. Plain folks neglect themselves; they think, that in order to please, it is sufficient to love with sincerity, and to convince others of their love. But there are few dispositions which do not require a little ornament. A man without art in the midst of the world is like a lady at the opera without *rouge*.

Erastus, with his usual frankness, had said to Cecilia, 'I love you;' and from that time loved her as if he had breathed nothing else; his love was his life. Floricourt had rendered himself agreeable by those little gallantries which have the air of pretending to nothing. Among the attentions which he paid to Cecilia, he chose, not the most passionate, but the most seducing. Nothing affected, nothing grave: he appeared so much the more amiable, as he seemed not to intend it. She pitied Erastus: did not know an honester man; it was pity that it was impossible to love him. She dreaded Floricourt; he was a dangerous creature, and would perhaps be the ruin of a woman; but how was it possible to defend one's self? However, she would not deceive Erastus. She must confess the whole to him.

'I esteem you, Erastus,' said Cecilia to him, 'and I am sensible you merit more. But the heart has its caprices; my own dissents from my reason.'

—'I understand you, madam,' replied Erastus, constraining himself, but with tears in his eyes; 'your reason pleads for me, but your heart for another.'—'I confess it, and not without regret: I should be to blame, if I were free; but there is no answering for inclination.'—'Very well, madam; I will love then alone: I shall derive the more glory from it.'—'But there, now, is the very thing I would not have.'—'Nor I neither; but that is to no purpose.'—'And what is to become of you?'—'Whatever love and nature please.'—'You distress me, Erastus, by thus abandoning yourself.'—'I must abandon myself, when I cannot help it.'—'How unhappy am I in having ever known you!'—'Indeed, you had need complain: it is a terrible misfortune to be beloved!'—'Yes, it is a misfortune to have cause to reproach one's self on account of a man we esteem.'—'You, madam, have nothing to reproach yourself. An honest man may complain of a coquette who trifles with him; or rather she is unworthy of his complaints and regret; but what wrongs have you committed? Have you employed any seducing arts to attract me, any complaisance to retain me? Did I consult you about loving you? Who obliges you to think me amiable? Follow your own inclination, and I will follow mine. Be not afraid that I shall plague you.'—'No, but you will plague yourself; for, in short, you will see me.'—'What! would you be cruel enough to forbid me your sight?'—'Far from it, I assure you; but I wish to see you easy, and as my best friend.'—'Friend, let it be: the name signifies nothing.'—'But the name is not enough; I would bring you back in reality to that sentiment so pure, so tender, and so solid, to that friendship which I feel for you.'—'Well, madam, you may love me as you please; pray now permit me to love you as I can, and as much as I can. I only desire the liberty of being unhappy after my own manner.'

The obstinacy of Erastus grieved Cecilia; but,

after all, she had done her duty: so much the worse for him if he loved her still. She gave herself up, therefore, without concern or reproach, to her inclination for Floricourt. The most refined gallantry was put in practice to captivate her. Floricourt succeeded without difficulty. He knew how to please, thought he loved, and was happy, if he had chosen to be so. But self-love is the bane of love. It was but a trifle in Floricourt's eyes to be loved more than every thing else: he wanted to be loved solely, without reserve or participation. It is true that he set the example: he had detached himself for Cecilia from a prude whom he had ruined, and a coquette who ruined him; he had broke off with five or six of the vainest and foolishest young fellows in the world. He supped no where but at Cecilia's, where it was delicious supping; and he had the goodness to think of her amidst a circle of women, not one of whom equalled her either in grace or beauty. Such uncommon proceedings, not to speak of merit still more uncommon, had not they a right to exact from Cecilia the most absolute devotion?

In the mean time, as he was not sufficiently in love to be at all deficient in address, he took care not to suffer his pretensions to appear at first. Never had man, before conquest, been more complaisant, more docile, less assuming, than Floricourt; but from the moment he saw himself master of her heart, he became its tyrant. Difficult, imperious, jealous, he wanted to possess alone all the faculties of Cecilia's soul. He could not so much as permit her one idea except his own, much less a thought which came not from him. A decisive taste, a strict connexion, was sure to displease him; but his meaning was to be guessed at. He would force her to ask him a hundred times over what he was thinking of, or what had put him out of humour; and it was never but as a favour that he confessed at last that such a thing had displeased him, or

such a person made him dull. In short, as soon as he saw that his will was a law, he declared it without ceremony, and it was submitted to without opposition. It was but a small matter to require of Cecilia the sacrifice of those pleasures which naturally presented themselves; he gave birth to them the oftener, on purpose to see them sacrificed to him. He spoke with transport of a play or an entertainment; he invited Cecilia to it; and they settled the party with ladies of his own naming: the hour came, they were dressed, the horses put to; he changed his design, and Cecilia was obliged to pretend a head-ache. He presented to her a she-friend, whom he introduced as an adorable woman: she was found such: an intimacy was contracted. A week after, he confessed he had been deceived; she was affected, insipid, or giddy; and Cecilia was obliged to break off with her.

Cecilia was in a short time reduced to slight acquaintances, whom however he complained of her seeing too often. She perceives not that her complaisance was changed into slavery. We think we pursue our own will when we pursue the will of those we love. Floricourt seemed to her only to forestall her own desires. She sacrificed every thing to him, without so much as suspecting that she made him any sacrifices; yet Floricourt's self-love was not satisfied.

The company of the town, perfectly frivolous and transitory as it was, yet appeared to him too interesting. He extolled solitude, he repeated a hundred times, that there was no true love but in the country, far from dissipation and noise, and that he should never be happy but in a retreat inaccessible to impertinents and rivals. Cecilia had a country house to his wish. She had longed to pass the finest part of the year there with him; but could she do it with decency? He gave her to understand, that it was sufficient to take off all the air of a private party by carrying such a friend

along with them as Erastus, and a woman of the character of Artenice. After all, if people should talk, their marriage, which was soon to be concluded, would silence them. They set out, Erastus was of the party, and this again was a refinement of Florieourt's self-love. He knew that Erastus was his rival, his unsuccessful rival: it was the most flattering testimony that he could have of his triumph; therefore he had contrived excellently to bring it about. His attentions to him had an air of compassion and superiority, at which Erastus was sometimes quite out of patience: but the tender and delicate friendship of Cecilia made him amends for these humiliations, and the fear of displeasing her made him disguise them. However, as he was sure that they were going into the country only in order to enjoy their love there at liberty, how could he resolve with himself to follow them? This reflection Cecilia made, as well as he: she would have hindered him, but the party was settled, past revocation. Besides, Artenice was young and handsome. Solitude, opportunity, liberty, example, jealousy and pique, might engage Erastus to turn towards her those vows which Cecilia could not listen to. Cecilia was modest enough to think it possible for a person to be unfaithful to her, and just enough to wish it: but it was betraying a very slight knowledge of the heart and character of Erastus.

Artenice was one of those women with whom love is only an arrangement of society, who are offended at a long attachment, who grow tired of a constant passion, and who depend sufficiently on the honesty of the men to deliver themselves up to them without reserve, and to quit them without hesitation. They had told her, 'We are going to pass some time in the country: Erastus is to be there: will you make one?' She replied with a smile, 'With all my heart; a pleasant scheme;' and the party was immediately settled. This was

an additional torment to Erastus. Artenice had heard Cecilia praise her friend, as the most prudent man in the world, the honestest and most reserved. 'That is charming,' said Artenice within herself; 'that is a kind of man to be taken and dismissed without precaution or noise. Happy or unhappy, that is not to the purpose: one is never at one's ease but with people of this sort. An Erastus is a rarity.' We may readily conclude, after these reflections, that Erastus did not want for encouragement.

Florlcourt behaved towards Cecilia with an assiduity perfectly distressing to an unsuccessful rival. Cecilia in vain endeavoured to constrain herself; her looks, her voice, her very silence betrayed her. Erastus was upon the rack; but he concealed his pain. Artenice, like a dexterous woman, kept conveniently at a distance, and engaged Erastus to follow her. 'How happy are they!' said she one day to him as they were walking together. 'Wholly taken up with each other, they feel a mutual satisfaction, and live only for themselves. It is a great happiness merely to love. What say you to it?'—'Yes, madam,' replied Erastus, looking down; 'it is a great happiness when two . . . . . .'—'Oh, there are always two: for I do not see that one is alone in the world.'—'I mean, madam, two hearts equally sensible, and made to love one another equally.'—'Equally! that is very unreasonable. For my part, I think that we ought to be less difficult, and to content ourselves with coming up within a small matter of it. Suppose I have more sensibility in my temper than he who attaches himself to me, must I punish him for it? Every one gives what he has, and we have no room to reproach him who contributes towards society that portion of sensibility which nature has given him. I wonder that the coldest hearts are always the most delicate. You, for example, you now are a man that would expect one to love you to distraction.'—'I, madam! I

expect nothing.'—'You mistake me; that is not what I mean. You have enough in you to seduce a woman, to be sure. I should not even be surprised at her conceiving an inclination for you.'—'That may be, madam: in point of folly, I doubt nothing: but if a woman were so foolish as to fall in love with me, I think she would be much to be pitied.'—'Is this a caution, sir, which you are so good as to give me?'—'You, madam? I flatter myself that you think me neither foolish nor weak enough to give you any such caution.'—'Very well, you speak in general then, and except me out of politeness?'—'The exception itself is unnecessary, madam; for you have nothing to do in the case.'—'Pardon me, sir; it is I who tell you, that you have qualities enough to please, and that one might very easily love you to distraction; and it is to me that you reply, that one should be very much to be pitied if one loved you. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more personal. Hey! what, you are embarrassed?'—'I confess that your raillery embarrasses me; I know not how to reply to it; but it is not generous to attack me with weapons which I am not armed with.'—'But if I were in earnest, Erastus: if nothing in the world were truer?'—'Your servant, madam: the situation I am now reduced to will not permit me to amuse you any longer.'—'Ah! upon my word he is in downright earnest,' said she, following him with her eyes. 'The tone of levity, the laughing air which I assumed, piqued him; he is a man for sentiment: I must talk to him in his own language. To-morrow, in this grove, one turn more, and my victory is decided.'

Erastus's walk with Artenice had appeared very long to Cecilia. Erastus returned from it quite pensive, and Artenice in triumph. 'Well,' said Cecilia to her friend, in a very low voice, 'what do you think of Erastus?'—'Why, I like him pretty well; he has not quite tired me, and that is a great deal; he has some excellent qualities, and one

might make an agreeable man of him. I find him only a little romantic in his manner. He expects sentiment; a fault of habit, a mere country prejudice, of which it is easy to break him.'—'*He expects sentiment!*' said Cecilia within herself; they are coming to terms already! This is going very far at one interview. I think Erastus acts his part with a good grace. Well! but if he is happy, am I to take it ill? Yet it was wrong in him to want to persuade me that he was so greatly to be pitied. He might have spared my delicacy the heavy reproaches, which he knew very well I heaped upon myself. It is the phrensy of lovers always to exaggerate their pains. In short, he is consoled, and I am sufficiently comforted.'

Cecilia, in this idea, put less restraint on herself with regard to Floricourt. Erastus, whom nothing escaped, became more melancholy than usual. Cecilia and Artenice attributed his melancholy to the same cause. A growing passion always produces that effect. The day after, Artenice did not fail to contrive a *tête-à-tête* for Cecilia and Floricourt, by taking away Erastus along with her.

'You are angry,' said she; 'and I want to be reconciled to you. I see, Erastus, that you are not one of those men with whom love is to be treated with raillery: you look upon an engagement as one of the most serious things in the world; I like you the better for it.'—'I! Not at all, madam; I am too well persuaded that a serious passion is the highest extravagance, and that love is no longer a pleasure than while it is a jest.'—'Be consistent, then. Yesterday evening you required an equal sensibility, a mutual inclination.'—'I required an impossibility; or, at least, the most uncommon thing in the world: and I maintain, that without this union, which is so difficult that it must be given up, the wisest and surest way is to make a jest of love, without annexing any chimerical value or importance to it.'—'Upon my word, my dear

Erastus, you talk like an angel. Why, indeed, should we torment ourselves to no purpose, endeavouring to love more than we are able? We agree, settle matters, grow weary of each other, and part. On casting up the account, we have had pleasure; the time, therefore, was well employed, and would to Heaven we could be so amused all our lives!'—'This now,' said Erastus within himself, 'is a very convenient way of thinking!'—'I well know,' continued she, 'what they call a serious passion: nothing is more gloomy, nothing more dull. Uneasiness, jealousy, are continually tormenting the two unhappy creatures. They pretend to be satisfied with each other, and weary themselves to death.'—'Ah, madam! what is it you say? They want nothing, if they love truly. Such an union is the charm of life, the delight of the soul, the fulness of happiness.'—'Really, sir, you are mad with your eternal inconsistencies. What would you have, pray?'—'What is not to be found, madam, and what, perhaps, will never be seen.'—'A fine expectation, truly! And in the mean while your heart will continue disengaged?'—'Alas! would to Heaven it could!'—'It is not so, then, Erastus?'—'No, certainly, madam, and you would pity its condition, could you but conceive it.' At these words he left her, lifting his eyes towards Heaven, and heaving a profound sigh. 'This, then,' said Artenice, 'is what they call a reserved man! He is so much so, that it makes him a downright beast. By good luck, I have not explained myself. Possibly I ought to have spoken out: bashful people must be assisted. But he walks off with an exclamation, without giving one time to ask him what possesses or afflicts him. We shall see: he must declare; for, in short, I am come to a compromise, and my honour is concerned.'

Floricourt, during supper, wanted to entertain himself at the expense of Erastus. 'So!' said he to Artenice, 'where have you been? Nothing

should be concealed from friends, and we set you the example.'—'Right,' said Artenice, with indignation; 'if we knew how to profit by the examples that are set us: did we even know what we would be at. If one talks of a serious passion, the gentleman treats it as a jest; if one agrees to its being a jest, he goes back again to the serious.'—'It is easy for you, madam,' said Erastus, 'to turn me into ridicule: I submit to it as much as you please.'—'Nay, sir! I have no such design: but we are among friends, let us explain. We have not time to observe and guess at each other. I please you; that you have given me to understand: I will not dissemble that you are agreeable enough to me. We are not come here to be idle spectators; honour itself requires that we should be employed: let us make an end, and understand one another. How is it that you would love me? How would you have me love you?'—'I, madam!' cried Erastus: 'I don't want you to love me.'—'What, sir! have you deceived me, then?'—'Not at all, madam; I call heaven to witness that I have not said one word to you in the least like love.'—'Nay, then,' said she to him, getting up from table, 'this is a piece of effrontery beyond any thing I ever saw.' Floricourt would have detained her. 'No, sir; I am not able to endure the sight of a man who has the assurance to deny the dull and insipid declarations with which he has affronted me, and which I had the goodness to put up with, prepossessed by the commendations that had been given me, I know not why, of this wretched creature.'

'Artenice is gone off in rage,' said Cecilia to Erastus, on seeing him again the next day; 'what has passed between you?'—'Some idle talk, madam, the result of which on my side was, that nothing is more to be dreaded than a serious passion, and nothing more despicable than a frivolous one. Artenice has seen me sigh; she thought I sighed

for her: and I undeceived her, that is all.'—'You undeceived her! that is handsome enough; but you should have done it with a little more art!'—'How, madam! could she dare to tell you that we were on the brink of love, and would you have had me contain myself? What would you have thought of my assent, or even of my silence?'—'That you were very much in the right. Artenice is young and handsome, and your attachment would have been merely an amusement.'—'I am not in a humour to amuse myself, madam, and I beg of you to spare the advice, by which I shall never profit.'—'But you are now alone with us, and you yourself must perceive that you will act but a very strange part here.'—'I shall act, madam, the part of a friend: nothing is, in my opinion, more honourable.'—'But, Erastus, how will you be able to support it?'—'Leave that to me, madam, and do not make yourself at all uneasy on my account.'—'I can't help being uneasy; for, in short, I know your situation, and, indeed, it is dreadful.'—'May be so; but it is neither in your power nor mine to render it better: let me alone, and let us talk no more of it.'—'Talk no more of it! Soon said; but you are unhappy, and I am the cause.'—'Oh! no, madam, no, I have told you so a hundred times; you have nothing to reproach yourself with: in God's name, be easy.'—'I should be easy, if you could but be so.'—'Nay, now you are cruel. Though you should insist upon knowing what passes in my soul, yet I should not have one pang the less, but you would have a piece of chagrin the more for it: prithee now forget that I love you.'—'Hey! how! forget it? I see it every moment.'—'You would have me leave you, then?'—'Why, our situation would require it.'—'Very well: drive me away then, that will be best.'—'I drive you away, my friend! It is for you that I am in pain.'—'Oh then, for my part, I declare to you, that I cannot live without

you.'—'You think so: but absence . . . . . .'—'Absence! a fine remedy for love like mine!'—'Doubt not its efficacy, my dear Erastus: there are women more amiable and less unjust than I.'—'I am glad of it; but that is all one to me.'—'You think so at present.'—'I am now what I shall be all my life long: I know myself: I know the women. Do not be afraid that any of them can make me either happy or unhappy.'—'I believe that you would not attach yourself at first; but you will dissipate in the world.'—'And with what? Nothing in it amuses me. Here at least I have no time to grow dull: I see you, or I am going to see you; you talk to me kindly; I am sure that you do not forget me: and if I were at a distance from you, I have an imagination that would be my torment.'—'And could it paint any thing more cruel than what you see?'—'I see nothing, madam: I desire to see nothing: spare me the uneasiness of being your confidant.'—'Indeed I admire your moderation.'—'Yes, I have great merit indeed, in being moderate! Would you have me beat you?'—'No; but people usually complain on such occasions.'—'And of what?'—'I do not know; but I cannot reconcile so much love with so much reason.'—'Be assured, madam, every one loves after his own fashion; mine is not to rave. If ill language would please you, I could bestow as much as another; but I doubt whether that would succeed.'—'I lose nothing by that, Erastus; and at the bottom of your heart . . . .'—'No, I vow that my heart respects you as much as my mouth. I never surprised myself one moment possessed with the least anger against you.'—'Yet you torment yourself, I see plainly. Melancholy gains upon you.'—'I am not very gay.'—'You hardly eat.'—'I live at least.'—'I am sure you do not sleep at all.'—'Pardon me, I sleep a little, and that is the happiest part of my time; for I see you in my slumbers such almost as I wish you to

be.'—'Erastus!'—'Cecilia!'—'You offend me.'—'Nay, madam! it is too much to want to rob me of my dreams. You are, in reality, such as you think proper: suffer me then, at least in idea, to have you such as pleases me.'—'Do not be angry, but let us talk reason. These very dreams, which I ought not to know of, nourish your passion.'—'So much the better, madam; so much the better: I should be very sorry to be cured of it.'—'And why do you persist to love me without hope?'—'Without hope! I am not reduced to that yet: if your sentiments were just, they would be durable. But . . . .'—'Do not flatter yourself, Erastus; I am in love, and for my whole life.'—'I do not flatter myself, Cecilia; it is you that slander yourself. Your passion is a fever, which will have its period. It is not generous to speak ill of one's rival: I am silent; but I refer it to the goodness of your disposition, to the delicacy of your heart.'—'They are both blind.'—'That is owning they are not so. One must have seen or have had some glimmerings, even to know that we see badly.'—'Well, I confess it; I remember to have discovered faults in Floricourt; but I know nothing more in him.'—'That knowledge will come to you, madam, and on that I depend.'—'And if I marry Floricourt, as indeed every thing tends that way . . .'—'In that case I shall have nothing more either to hope or to fear, and my resolution is already taken.'—'And what is it?'—'To give over loving you.'—'And how are you to do that?'—'How? nothing so easy. If I were in the army, and a ball . . . .'—'O heavens!'—'Is it so difficult, then, to suppose one's self in the army?'—'Ah, my cruel friend, what is it you say? and with what levity do you tell me of a mischief for which I should never forgive myself!' Cecilia began to melt at this idea, when Floricourt came up to them. Erastus soon left them, according to his usual practice. 'Our friend, my dear Cecilia,' said Floricourt, 'is a

very gloomy mortal; what say you?'—'He is an honest creature,' replied Cecilia, 'whose virtues I respect.'—'Faith, with all his virtues, I wish he would go and indulge his reveries somewhere else: we want gaiety and company in the country.'—'Perhaps he has some reason to be pensive and solitary.'—'Yes, I believe so, and I guess it. You blush, Cecilia! I shall be discreet, and your embarrassment imposes silence on me.'—'And what should be my embarrassment, sir? You believe that Erastus loves me, and you have reason to believe it. I pity him, I advise him, I talk to him as his friend; there is nothing in all this to blush at.'—'Such a confession, my beautiful Cecilia, renders you still more deserving of esteem; but allow that it comes a little too late.'—'I did not think myself obliged, sir, to inform you of a secret which was not mine, and I should have concealed it from you all my life long, if you had not surprised me into the discovery. There is in these kinds of confidences an ostentation and cruelty not in my disposition. We should at least respect those whom we have made unhappy.'—'There is heroism for you,' cried Floricourt in a tone of anger and irony. 'And does this friend, whom you use so well, know how far matters are gone between us?'—'Yes, sir, I have told him all.'—'And he has still the goodness to stay here!'—'I endeavoured to dispose him to leave us.'—'Ah! I have nothing more to say; I should have been surprised if your delicacy had not forerun mine. You perceived the indecency of suffering a man who loves you to continue in your house, at the very moment in which you are going to declare for his rival. There would even be inhumanity in it to render him a witness of the sacrifice you make me. When is he to depart?'—'I do not know; I have not had the courage to prescribe the time; and he has not the resolution to determine upon it.'—'You rally Cecilia: who then is to propose

to him to rid us of his presence? It would not be handsome in me.'—'It shall be myself, sir; do not be uneasy.'—'And what uneasiness do I show, madam? Would you do me the honour of supposing me to be jealous? I assure you I am not in the least so: my delicacy has yourself only in view, and for the little pain it may give you.....' —'It will give me pain, no doubt, to deprive a respectable friend of the only consolation that is left him; but I know how to do myself violence.'—'Violence, madam! that is very strong. I would have no violence; that would be the way to render me odious; and I shall therefore go myself, and persuade this respectable friend not to abandon you.'—'Go on, sir; your raillery is mighty well timed, and I deserve, indeed, that you should talk to me in this manner.'—'I am very unhappy, madam, to have displeased you,' said Floricourt, on seeing her eyes bedewed with tears. 'Forgive me my imprudence. I did not know all the concern you had for my rival and your friend.' At these words he left her, overcome with grief.

Erastus, at his return, found her in this situation. 'What is the matter, madam?' said he, accosting her: 'in tears!'—'You see, sir, the most wretched of women: I am sensible that my weakness will ruin me, and yet am unable to cure myself. A man, to whom I have sacrificed every thing, doubts of my sentiments, treats me with contempt, and suspects me.'—'I understand, madam; he is jealous, and must be made easy. Your quiet is concerned in it, and there is nothing that I would not sacrifice to a concern so dear to me. Adieu: may you be happy! and I shall be less wretched.' Cecilia's tears burst forth afresh at these words. 'I have exhorted you to fly me, said she to him; 'I advised you to it as a friend, and for your own sake. The effort I made over my own soul had nothing humiliating in it; but to banish you to gratify an unreasonable man, to

rid him of a suspicion which I ought never to have feared; to be obliged to justify my love by the sacrifice of friendship, is shameful and overwhelming. Never did any thing cost me so dear before.' —'It must be so, madam, if you love Floricourt.' —'Yes, my dear Erastus; pity me: I do love him, and it is in vain I reproach myself for it.' Erastus listened no longer, but went off.

Floricourt made use of every method to appease Cecilia; his gentleness, his complaisance, were not to be equalled, when his will was fulfilled. Erastus was almost forgot; and what is it we do not forget for the person we love, when we have the happiness to believe ourselves beloved again! One only amusement, alas! and that a very innocent one, yet remained to Cecilia in their solitude. She had brought up a goldfinch, which, by a wonderful instinct, answered to her caresses. He knew her voice, and would fly to meet her. He never sung but when he saw her; he never eat but out of her hand, nor drank but out of her mouth: she would give him his liberty; he would use it but for a minute, and as soon as she called him he flew to her immediately. No sooner was he placed on her bosom, than a sensibility seemed to agitate his wings, and to precipitate the warblings of his melodious throat. Could one believe that the haughty Floricourt was offended at the attention which Cecilia paid to the sensibility and sportiveness of this little animal? 'I will know,' said he one day within himself, 'whether the love she entertains for me is superior to these weaknesses. It would be pleasant, indeed, if she should be more attached to her goldfinch than to her lover. Yet it may be so; I will make the experiment, and that before the evening be over. And where is the little bird?' said he, accosting her with a smile. 'He is enjoying the open air and liberty; he is somewhere fluttering in the garden.'—'And are you not afraid that at last he should accustom himself to that,

and never return more ?'—' I would forgive him, if he found himself happier.'—' Ah ! prithee now let us see if he be faithful to you. Will you please to recal him ?' Cecilia made the usual signal, and the bird flew to her hand. ' That is charming,' says Floricourt; ' but he is too dear to you: I am jealous of him, and I would have *all or nothing* from the person I love.' At these words he attempted to lay hold of the dear little bird, in order to throttle it; she set up a cry, the bird flew away; Cecilia, affrighted, grew pale, and lost all sensation. The servants ran to her assistance, and recalled her to life. As soon as she opened her eyes, she saw at her feet, not the man whom she loved best, but to her the most odious of mortals. ' Begone, sir,' said she to him with horror. ' This last stroke has given me a clear insight of your frightful character, equally mean and cruel. Out of my house ! never to enter it more ! You are too happy that I still respect myself more than I despise you. O, my dear and worthy Erastus, to what a man should I have sacrificed you !' Floricourt went out, fuming with rage and shame; the bird returned to caress his beautiful mistress; and it is unnecessary to add, that Erastus saw himself recalled.

THE

PRETENDED PHILOSOPHER.

CLARISSA had for some years heard of nothing but philosophers. 'What kind of mortals are they?' said she: 'I want much to see one.' They tell her first, that true philosophers were very rare, and not much addicted to communication! but in every other point, they were of all men the plainest, without the least singularity. 'There are two sorts, then,' said she; 'for in all the accounts that I hear, a philosopher is a fantastical being, who pretends to be like nothing.' Of those, they told her, there were enough every where; 'you shall have as many as you please of them: nothing so easily contrived.'

Clarissa was in the country with an idle party, who sought only to amuse themselves. They presented to her, a few days after, the sententious Aristus. 'The gentleman then is a philosopher?' said she, on seeing him. 'Yes, madam,' replied Aristus. 'This philosophy is a fine thing, is it not?'—'Why, madam, it is the knowledge of good and evil, or, if you please, wisdom.'—'Is that all?' said Doris. 'And the fruit of this wisdom,' continued Clarissa, 'is to be happy, no doubt?'—'Add, madam, to make others happy also.'—'I should be a philosopher too, then,' said the simple Lucinda in a low voice; 'for I have been told a hundred times, that it depended only on me to be happy by making others happy.'—'Right! who don't know that?' resumed Doris. 'It is a mere stage secret.'

Aristus, with a smile of contempt, gave them to understand that philosophical happiness was not that which a pretty woman can taste, and make

others taste. 'I doubted it much,' said Clarissa: 'and nothing is more unlike, I should think, than a fine woman and a philosopher. But let us hear first how the sage Aristus makes use of it, in order to be happy himself.'—'That is very simple, madam: I have no prejudices, I depend on nobody, I live on little, I love nothing, and I speak every thing that I think.'—'To love nothing,' observed Cleon, 'seems to me a disposition but little favourable to make people happy.'—'How, sir!' replied the philosopher; 'what, do we do good only to that we love? Do you love the miserable wretch whom you relieve as you go along? It is just so that we distribute to mankind the assistance of our lights.'—'And it is with your lights then,' said Doris, 'that you make people happy?'—'Yes, madam, and that we are so ourselves.'

The fat Lady President of Ponval thought this happiness very slender! 'Has a philosopher,' demanded Lucinda, 'many pleasures?'—'He has but one, madam, that of despising them all.'—'That must be very entertaining,' said Mrs. President, roughly. 'And if you love nothing, sir, what do you do with your soul?'—'What do I do with it! I employ it to the only use worthy of it. I contemplate, I observe the wonders of Nature.'—'Ay, but what can that nature have interesting to you,' replied Clarissa, 'if mankind, if your equals, have nothing in them to attach you?'—'My equals, madam! I will not dispute about words: but that expression is a little too strong. But however that be, Nature, which I study, has to me the attraction of curiosity, which is the spring of understanding, as that which is called desire is the movement of sentiment.'—'Oh, ay! I conceive,' said Doris, 'that curiosity is something; but do you reckon desire, sir, as nothing?'—'Desire, I have already told you, is an attraction of another sort.'—'Why then deliver yourself up to one of these attractions, while you resist the other?'—'Ah, madam! because

the enjoyments of the understanding are not mingled with any bitterness, and all those of the senses contain a concealed poison.'—'But at least,' said Cleon, 'you have senses?'—'Yes, I have senses, if you please; but they have no dominion over me: my mind receives their impressions as a glass, and nothing but the pure objects of the understanding can affect it strongly.'—'A very insipid fellow this!' said Doris to Clarissa, in a very low voice; 'who brought this strange creature here?'—'Peace!' replied Clarissa; 'this will do for the country: there is a way to divert ourselves with him.'

Cleon, who wanted still to develop the character of Aristus, testified his surprise at seeing him resolved to love nothing; 'for, after all,' said he, 'do you know nothing amiable?'—'I know surfaces,' replied the philosopher; 'but I know how to defy the bottom.'—'It remains then to know,' said Cleon, 'whether this defiance be well founded.'—'Oh, very well founded, believe me: I have seen enough to convince me that this globe is peopled only by fools, knaves, and ingrates.'—'If you were to consider it well,' said Clarissa to him, in a tone of reproach, 'you would be less unjust, and perhaps also more happy.'

The sage, confounded for a moment, pretended not to have heard. Word was brought that dinner was ready; he gave his hand to Clarissa, and seated himself next her at table. 'I would fain,' said she to him, 'reconcile you to human nature.'—'Impossible, madam! impossible: man is the most vicious of beings. What can be more cruel, for example, than the spectacle of your dinner? How many innocent animals are sacrificed to the voraciousness of man! The ox, from which you have this beef, what harm had he done you? And the sheep, from whence came this mutton, the symbol of candour, what right had you over his life? And this pigeon, the ornament of our dove-houses, just torn from its tender mate? O heavens! if there

had been a *Buffon** among the animals, in what class would he place man? The tiger, the vulture, the shark, would yield to him the first rank among those of prey!' All the company concluded that the philosopher subsisted only on pulse, and they were afraid to offer him any part of the meats which he enumerated with so much compassion. 'Nay, help me,' said he: 'since they have gone so far as to kill them, somebody must eat them.' He declaimed, in like manner, at the same time that he eat of every thing, against the profusion of victuals, the pains taken to procure them, and the delicacy of them: 'O happy time!' said he, 'when man browsed with the goats. Some drink, pray! Nature is greatly degenerated!' The philosopher got drunk in describing the clear brook where his forefathers used to quench their thirst.

Cleon seized the moment when wine makes us say every thing, to discover the principle of this philosophical ill-humour, which extended itself towards all mankind. 'Well,' said he to Aristus, 'you are here now among men: do you find them so odious? Confess that you condemned them on hearsay, and that they do not deserve all the harm that is said of them.'—'On hearsay, sir! Learn that a philosopher judges not but after his own notions: it is because I have well considered, and well developed mankind, that I believe them proud, vain, and unjust.'—'Ah! prithee, now,' interrupted Cleon, 'spare us a little: our admiration of you merits at least some tenderness; for, in short, you cannot reproach us with not honouring merit.'—'And how do you honour it?' replied the philosopher briskly: 'is it by neglect and desertion that it is to be honoured? O! the philosophers of Greece were the oracles of their age, the legislators of their country. Now-a-days wisdom and virtue languish in oblivion; intrigue, meanness, and servility, carry all before

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* *Buffon*, the celebrated naturalist.

them.'—'Suppose that were the case,' said Cleon, 'it would possibly be the fault of those great men who disdain to show themselves.'—'And would you have them, then, run their heads into the faces, or rather throw themselves at the feet of the dispensers of rewards?'—'It is true,' said Cleon, 'that they might spare themselves the trouble, and that such a person as yourself (pardon my bringing up your name) . . .'—'No harm done,' replied the philosopher, with great humility. 'Such a person as yourself ought to be dispensed from paying his court.'—'I pay my court! Ah! let them wait for that; I believe their pride would never have much to plume itself upon. I know how to set a right value on myself, thank Heaven! and I would go and live in the deserts rather than disgrace my being.'—'It would be great pity,' said Cleon, 'that society should lose you: born to enlighten mankind, you ought to live amongst them. You cannot think, ladies, the good that a philosopher does to the world: I will lay a wager, now, that this gentleman has discovered a multitude of moral truths, and that there are perhaps at this very time fifty virtues of his own making.'—'Virtues!' replied Aristus, looking down, 'I have not struck out many of them, but I have unveiled many vices.'—'How, sir!' said Lucinda to him, 'why did not you leave them their veil? They would have been less ugly.'—'Your humble servant for that,' replied Madam de Ponval: 'I love an acknowledged vice better than an equivocal virtue: one knows at least what to depend on.'—'And yet see how they requite us!' cried Aristus, with indignation. 'It is on this account that I have taken the resolution to live only for myself, let the world go on as it may.'—'No,' said Clarissa politely to him, getting up from table, 'I must have you live for us. Have you any urgent business at Paris?'—'None, madam: a philosopher has no business.'—'Well, then, I shall keep you here. The country should be

agreeable to philosophy, and I promise you solitude, repose, and freedom.'—'Freedom, madam!' said the philosopher, in an articulate voice; 'I am greatly afraid you will fail in your promise.'

The company dispersed to walk, and Aristus, with a thoughtful air, pretended to go and meditate in a walk, where he mused without thinking of any thing. I mistake, he thought of Clarissa, and said within himself, 'A handsome woman, a good house, all the conveniences of life: that promises well! let us see the end. It must be confessed,' continued he, 'that society is a pleasant scene: if I were gallant now, forward, complaisant, amiable, they would scarce pay any attention to me: they see nothing else in the world, and the vanity of women is surfeited with these common homages; but to tame a bear, to civilise a philosopher, to bend his pride, to soften his soul, is a triumph difficult and uncommon, with which their self-love is not a little flattered. Clarissa, of her own accord, rushes into my toils; let me expect her there, without coming to any compromise.'

The company on their side amused themselves at the expense of Aristus. 'He is a pleasant original enough,' said Doris: 'what shall we strike out of him?'—'A comedy,' replied Cleon; 'and if Clarissa will come into it, my plan is already settled.' He communicated his thought, all the company applauded it, and Clarissa, after some difficulty, consented to play her part. She was much younger and handsomer than was necessary to move a philosopher, and some words, some looks which had escaped our sage, seemed to promise an excellent catastrophe. She threw herself, therefore, as it were by chance, into the same walk with Aristus. 'I put you out,' said she; 'excuse me, I was only passing.'—'You do not interrupt me, madam; I can meditate with you.'—'You will do me pleasure,' says Clarissa: 'I perceive that a philosopher does not think like another man; and I should be

very glad to see things with your eyes.'—'It is true, madam, that philosophy creates, as it were, a new world. The vulgar see only in the gross: the details of nature are a spectacle reserved for us: it is for us that she seems to have disposed with an art so wonderful, the fibres of these leaves, the stamina of these flowers, the texture of this rind: an ant-hill is to me a republic, and each of the atoms that compose the world appear, in my eyes, a new world.'—'That is admirable!' said Clarissa: 'what was it took up your thoughts this moment?'—'These birds,' replied the sage. 'They are happy, are they not?'—'Ah! very happy, without doubt; and can they be otherwise? Independence, equality, few wants, ready pleasures, oblivion of the past, no concern for the future, and their whole solicitude to support life, and to perpetuate their species; what lessons, madam, what lessons for mankind!'—'Confess, then, that the country is a delicious abode; for, in short, it bring us nearer to the condition of animals; and, like them, we seem to have no laws there, but the gentle instinct of nature.'—'Ah, madam! how true is all this! but the impression is effaced from the heart of man; society has ruined every thing.'—'You are right; this society is something very troublesome; and since we want nobody, it would be quite natural to live for one's self.'—'Alas! that is what I have said a hundred times, and what I never cease to write; but nobody will listen to me: you, madam, for example, who seem to acknowledge the truth of this principle, could you have the strength to practise it?'—'I cannot but wish,' said Clarissa, 'that philosophy should come in fashion: I should not be the last to come into it, as I ought not to be the first to set it.'—'This is the language that every one speaks; nobody will venture to set the example, and, in the mean time, human nature groans, loaded with the yoke of opinion, and the chains of custom.'—'What would you have us

do, sir? Our ease, our honour, all that we hold dear, depend on decorums.'—'Well, madam! observe, then, these tyrannical decorums; wear virtues as you do habits, made to the taste of the age: but your soul is your own: society has no right but to externals, and you owe it only appearances. The decorums so much insisted on are themselves nothing more than appearances well preserved: but the interior, madam, the interior is the sanctuary of the will, and the will is independent.'—'I conceive,' said Clarissa, 'that I may wish for what I please, provided I go no further.'—'To be sure,' replied the philosopher, 'it is better to stop there, than to run the hazard of giving into imprudencies: for, madam, do you know what a vicious woman is? It is a woman who has no regard, no respect to herself, in any case.'—'What, sir!' demanded Clarissa, affecting an air of satisfaction, 'does vice, then, consist only in imprudence?'—'Before I answer you, madam, permit me to ask you what is vice in your eyes? Is it not that which overturns order, which hurts, or which may hurt?'—'The very thing.'—'Very well, madam; all that is external. Why, then, submit your sentiments and your thoughts to prejudice? See in these birds that soft and unrestrained liberty which nature gave you, and which you have lost.'—'Ah!' said Clarissa, with a sigh, 'the death of my husband had restored me this precious gift; but I am on the point of renouncing it again.'—'O Heaven! what do I hear!' cried he: 'are you going to form a new chain?'—'Why, I do not know.'—'You do not know!'—'They will have it so.'—'And who, madam, who are the enemies who dare propose it to you? No; believe me, marriage is a yoke, and freedom is the supreme good. But, however, who is the husband whom they would give you?'—'Cleon.'—'Cleon, madam! I am no longer surprised at the unconstrained air he assumes here. He questions, de-

cides, condescends sometimes to be affable, and has that haughty politeness which seems to let himself down to a level with us: it is plain that he is doing the honours of his own house, and I know, from henceforth, the respect and deference that I owe him.'—'You owe to each other a mutual civility, and I intend that with me every body shall be on an equality.'—'You intend it, Clarissa? Alas! your choice destroys all equality between mankind and the person who is to possess you . . . But let us talk no more of it, I have said too much already; this place is not made for a philosopher. Permit me to leave it.'—'No,' said she to him, 'I have need of you, and you plunge me into irresolutions, from which you alone can draw me. It must be confessed, that philosophy is a very comfortable thing; but if a philosopher were a deceiver, he would be a very dangerous friend! Adieu! I would not have them see us together: I am going to rejoin the company: come to us soon. See there, then,' said she, as she was going from him, 'what they call a philosopher!'—'Courage!' said he on his side; 'Cleon hangs only by a thread.' Clarissa with blushes gave an account of the first scene, and her beginning was received with applause; but the Lady President, knitting her brow, 'Do you intend,' said she, 'that I should be only a looker-on? No, no, I must play my part, and I assure you it shall be pleasant. Do you think that you shall subdue this sage? No: I will have the honour of it.'—'You, madam!'—'Oh! you may laugh: my fifty years, my triple chin, and my mustachios of Spanish snuff, defy all your graces.' The whole company applauded this challenge by redoubled peals of laughter. 'Nothing is more serious,' resumed she; 'and if it be not enough to triumph over one, you have only to join, and dispute the conquest with me: I defy you all three. Go, divine Doris, charming Lucinda, admirable Clarissa, go and display before his eyes all the se-

ductions of beauty and coquetry! I laugh at it.' She spoke these words with a tone of resolution sufficient to make her rivals tremble.

Cleon affected to appear dull and pensive at the arrival of Aristus, and Clarissa assumed with the philosopher a reserved air of mystery. They spake little, but ogled much. Aristus, on retiring to his apartment, found it furnished with all the inventions of luxury. 'Oh, heavens!' said he to the company, who for the sake of diverting themselves had conducted him thither, 'O heavens! is it not ridiculous, that all this preparation should be made for one man's sleep? Was it thus that they slept at Lacedæmon? O Lycurgus! what wouldst thou say? A toilette for me! This is downright mockery. Do they take me for a Sybarite? I must retire; I cannot stand it.'—'Would you have us,' said Clarissa, 'unfurnish it on purpose for you? Take my advice, and enjoy the pleasures of life when they present themselves: a philosopher should know how to put up with every thing, and accommodate himself to every thing.'—'Very well, madam,' said he, somewhat appeased, 'I must at present comply with you; but I shall never be able to sleep on this heap of down. Upon my word,' says he, as he laid himself down, 'this luxury is a fine thing!' and the philosopher fell asleep.

His dreams recalled to his remembrance his conversation with Clarissa; and he awoke with the pleasing idea, that this virtue by convention, which is called prudence in women, would make but a feeble resistance against him.

He was not yet up, when a lacquey came to propose the bath to him. The bath was a good presage. 'Be it so,' said he; 'I will bathe: the bath is a natural institution. As for perfumes, the earth yields them; let us not disdain her presents.' He would fain have made use of the toilette which they had provided for him; but shame restrained him. He contented himself with giving to his philo-

sophical negligence the most decent air he could, and the glass was twenty times consulted. 'What a fright you have made yourself!' said Clarissa to him, on seeing him appear: 'why not dressed like the rest of the world? This habit, this wig, give you a vulgar air, which you have not naturally.'—'What, madam! is it by the air that we are to judge of mankind? Would you have me submit to the caprices of fashion, and be dressed like your Cleons?'—'Why not, sir? Do you not know that they derive an advantage from your simplicity, and that it is this in particular that lessens in people's opinions the consideration due to you? I myself, in order to do you justice, have need of my reflection: the first sight makes against you, and it is very often the first sight that decides. Why not give to virtue all the charms of which she is capable?'—'No, madam, art is not made for her. The more naked, the more beautiful; they disguise her when they endeavour to adorn her.'—'Very well, sir; let her contemplate herself alone at her ease: as for me, I declare that this rustic and low air displeases me. Is it not strange, that having received from nature a distinguished figure, any one should take a pride in degrading it?'—'But, madam, what would you say, if a philosopher should employ his attention about his dress, and set himself off like your marquis?'—'I would say, he seeks to please, and he does right; for do not flatter yourself, Aristus; there is no pleasing without taking a good deal of pains.'—'Ah! I desire nothing so much as to please in your eyes.'—'If such a desire really possesses you,' replied Clarissa, with a tender look, 'bestow at least a quarter of an hour upon it. Here, Jasmin, Jasmin! go, dress the gentleman's head.' Aristus, blushing, yields at length to these gentle instances; and now behold the sage at his toilette!

The nimble hand of Jasmin disposes his locks with art: his physiognomy now displays itself; he

admires the metamorphosis, and is scarce able to conceive it. 'What will they say on seeing me?' said he to himself: 'let them say what they please; but the philosopher has a good face.' He presents himself blown up with pride, but with an awkward and bashful air. 'Ay, now,' said Clarissa, 'you look handsome. There is nothing now but the colour of those clothes that offends my eyes.'—'Ah! madam, for the sake of my reputation, leave me at least this characteristic of the gravity of my condition.'—'And what, then, by your leave, is this chimerical condition which you have so much at heart? I approve very much of people's being wise; but in my opinion all sorts of colours are indifferent to wisdom. Is this chestnut of Mr. Guillaume more founded in nature than the sky-blue or rose-colour? By what caprice is it that you imitate in your garments the husk of the chestnut, rather than the leaf of the rose or the tuft of the lily, with which the spring is crowned? Ah! for my part, I confess to you that the rose-colour charms my sight: that colour has something, I know not what, of softness in it, which goes to my very soul, and I should think you the handsomest creature living in a suit of rose-colour.'—'Rose-colour, madam! O heavens! a philosopher in rose-colour!'—'Yes, sir, a very rose-colour: what would you have? It is my weakness. By writing to Paris directly, you may have it by to-morrow afternoon, can you not?'—'What, madam?'—'A suit for the country of the colour of my ribands.'—'No, madam, it is impossible.'—'Pardon, me, nothing is easier; the workmen need only be up all night.'—'Alas! it is of mighty consequence what the time is which they are to employ in rendering me ridiculous! Consider, I beseech you, that such an extravagance as this would ruin my reputation.'—'Well, sir, when you shall have lost that reputation, you will gain another; and it is odds that you will gain by the exchange.'—'I protest to you, madam, that it is

shocking to me to displease you, but . . . .'—' But you put me out of all patience; I do not love to be thwarted. It is very strange,' continued she in a tone of displeasure, ' that you should refuse me a trifle. The importance you give it teaches me to take care of myself in matters that are more serious.' At these words she quitted the room, leaving the philosopher confounded that so trifling an incident should destroy his hopes. ' Rose-colour!' said he; ' rose-colour! how ridiculous! what a contrast! she will have it so; I must submit:' and the philosopher wrote for the clothes.

' You are obeyed, madam,' said he to Clarissa, accosting her. ' Has it cost you much?' demanded she with a smile of disdain. ' A great deal, madam; more than I can express: but, in short, you would have it so.' All the company admired the philosopher's head. Madam President, above all, swore by the great gods that she had never seen any man's head so well dressed before. Aristus thanked her for so flattering a compliment. ' Compliments!' resumed she; ' compliments! I never make any. They are the false coin of the world.' —' Nothing was ever better conceived,' cried the sage; ' that deserves to be set down in writing.' They perceived that Madam President was now beginning the attack, and they left them to themselves. ' You think, then,' said she to him, ' that nobody but yourself can make sentences? I am a philosopher too, such as you see me.'—' You, madam! and of what sect? A Stoic, or an Epicurean?'—' Oh! take my word for it, the name is nothing. I have ten thousand crowns a year, which I spend with gaiety; I have good champagne, which I drink with my friends; I enjoy a good state of health; I do what I please, and leave every one to live after their own manner. There's a sect for you!'—' It is well done, and exactly what Epicurus taught.'—' Oh! I declare to you I was taught nothing: all this comes of my own self.

For these twenty years I have read nothing but the list of my wines and the bill of fare of my supper.'—'Why, upon that footing you must be the happiest woman in the world.'—'Happy! not entirely so: I want a husband of my own way of thinking. My president was a beast: good for nothing but the bar: he understood the law, and that was all. I want a man who knows how to love me, and who would employ himself about me alone.'—'You may find a thousand, madam.'—'Oh, I want but one; but I would have him be a good one. Birth, fortune, all that is perfectly indifferent to me; I attach myself only to the man.'—'Indeed, madam, you astonish me: you are the first woman in whom I have found any principles: but is it precisely a husband that you want?'—'Yes, sir, a husband who shall be mine in all the forms. These lovers are all rogues, who deceive us, and who forsake us without leaving us room to complain: whereas a husband insures in the face of the world: and if mine should desert me, I should like to be able to go, with my title in my hand, and in all honour and honesty give a hundred slaps on the face to the insolent hussy that should have taken him from me.'—'Very good, madam, very good! the right of property is an inviolable right. But do you know that there are very few souls like yours? What courage! what vigour!'—'Oh, I have as much as a lioness. I know I am not handsome; but ten thousand crowns a year, made over on the wedding-day, are worth all the prettinesses of a Lucinda or Clarissa; and though love be rare in this age, one ought to have it for ten thousand crowns.' This conversation brought them back again to the house, at the very instant that word was brought that supper was ready.

Aristus appeared plunged in serious reflections; he weighed the advantages and inconveniences that might attend his marrying the Lady President, and calculated how much longer a woman of fifty

could live, swallowing every evening a bottle of champagne. A dispute which arose between Madam de Ponval and Clarissa drew him out of his reverie. Doris gave rise to the dispute. 'Is it possible,' said she, 'that Madam President should have been able to support for a whole hour a *tête-à-tête* with a philosopher? she who falls a yawning the moment one talks to her of reason!'—'Truly,' replied Madam de Ponval, 'it is because your reason has not common sense: ask this wise man here if mine be not good. We talked of the state that suits an honest woman, and he agrees with me, that a good husband is by much the best for her.'—'Oh fie!' cried Clarissa, 'are we made to be slaves? And what becomes then of that freedom, which is the first of all goods?' Cleon declaimed against this system of freedom; he maintained, that the union of hearts was very different from a state of slavery. Madam President supported this opinion, and declared that she could perceive no distinction between the love of freedom and the love of libertinism. 'May this glass of wine,' said she, 'be the last I shall drink, if I ever form the least dependence on any man who shall not first have taken an oath that he will be only mine. All the rest is but froth.'—'And there now,' said Clarissa, 'is the great mortification of marriage. Love with its freedom loses all its delicacy: is it not so, sir?' demanded she of the philosopher. 'Why, madam, I have thought as you do; yet it must be confessed that if freedom has its charms, it has also its dangers, its rocks: happy dispositions are so great a good, and inconstancy is so natural to man, that the moment he feels a laudable inclination, he acts prudently in depriving himself of the fatal power of changing.'—'Do you hear him, ladies? These men for my money! no flattery! this is what is called a philosopher. Try to seduce him if you can; for my part I retire quite charmed. Adieu, philosopher; I want rest: I did not shut my eyes all last

night, and I long to be asleep, in order to have the pleasure of dreaming.' She accompanied this adieu with an amorous glance, twinkling with champagne. 'Ladies,' said Lucinda, 'did you mind that look?'—'Surely,' replied Doris, 'she is distracted for Aristus; that is clear.'—'For me, madam! you do not think so: our tastes, I believe, and our tempers are not made for each other. I drink little, I swear still less, and I do not love to be confined.'—'Ah! sir, ten thousand crowns a year!'—'Ten thousand crowns a year, madam, are an insult when mentioned to persons like myself.'

These words were repeated the next day to Madam the President: 'Oh! the insolent wretch!' said she; 'I am piqued: you shall see him at my feet.' I pass slightly over the nocturnal reflections of the sage Aristus. A good coach, a commodious apartment, very far from my lady's, and the best cook in Paris; such was his plan of life. 'Our philosophers,' said he, 'perhaps will murmur a little. However, an ugly woman has in it something philosophical: at least, they will not suspect that I have pursued the pleasures of sensuality.'

The day of his triumph arrives, and the suit of rose-colour along with it: he views it, and blushes through vanity, rather than shame. Cleon however came to see him, with the disturbed air of one possessed; and after having cast an eye of indignation on the preparations for his dressing, 'Sir,' said he to him, 'if I had to do with a man of the world, I should propose to him, by way of preface, to exchange a thrust with me. But I am speaking to a philosopher, and I come to assault him with no other arms than frankness and virtue.'—'What is the matter, then?' demanded the sage, somewhat confounded at this preamble. 'I loved Clarissa, sir,' replied Cleon; 'she loved me: we were going to be married. I know not what change is made all of a sudden in her soul, but she will not hear me speak any more either of marriage or

of love. I had at first only some suspicions concerning the cause; but this rose-coloured suit confirms them. Rose-colour is her passion; you adopt her colours: you are my rival.'—'I, sir?'—'I cannot doubt it; and all the circumstances that attest it crowd themselves on my imagination: your secret walks, your whispers in the ear, looks and words that have escaped you, her hatred particularly against Madam de Ponval, every thing betrays you, every thing serves to open my eyes. Hear then, sir, what I have to propose. One of us must give place. Violence is an unjust method; generosity will set us on good terms. I love, I idolize Clarissa! I had been happy but for you; I may still be so: my assiduities, time, and your absence, may bring her back to me. If, on the contrary, I must renounce her, you see one who will be driven to despair, and death will be my resource. Judge, Aristus, whether your situation be the same. Consult yourself, and answer me. If the happiness of your life depends on giving up your conquest to me, I require nothing, and I retire.'—'Go, sir,' replied the philosopher to him with a serene air; 'you shall never overcome Aristus in a point of generosity; and whatever it may cost me, I will prove to you that I merited this mark of esteem.'

'At last,' said he, when Cleon had left the room, 'here is an opportunity of showing an heroical virtue. Ha, ha! you gentlemen of the world, you will learn to admire us..... They will not know it perhaps.... Oh yes: Clarissa will communicate it in confidence to her friends; these will tell it again to others: the adventure is uncommon enough to make a noise; after all, the worst that can happen will be to publish it myself. It is necessary that a good deed should be known, and it matters not which way: our age has need of these examples; they are lessons for mankind. ... However, let me not become a dupe to my own virtues, and dis-

possess myself of Clarissa before I am sure of Madam President. Let me see what champagne and sleep may have produced.'

While he reflected thus on his conduct, the philosopher dressed himself. The industrious Jasmin surpassed himself in dressing his head; the rose-coloured suit was put on before the looking-glass with a secret complacency, and the sage sallied out all radiant to visit Madam President, who received him with an exclamation of surprise. But passing all of a sudden from joy to confusion, 'I perceive,' said she, 'Clarissa's favourite colour: you are attentive to study her taste. Go, Aristus, go, and avail yourself of the trouble you take to please her; it will no doubt have its reward.'—'My natural ingenuousness,' replied the philosopher, 'permits me not to conceal from you, that in the choice of this colour I have followed only her caprice. I will do more, madam; I will confess that my first desire was to please in her eyes. The wisest is not without weakness; and when a woman prejudices us by flattering attentions, it is difficult not to be touched with them; but how my attachment is weakened! I acknowledge it with reproach to myself, madam, and you ought also to reproach yourself for it.'—'Ah, philosopher! why is this not true? But this rose-colour confounds all my ideas.'—'Very well, madam! I assumed it with regret; I now go to quit it with joy: and if my first simplicity....'—'No, stay; I think you charming. But what do I say? Ah! how happy are people in being so handsome! Aristus! why am I not beautiful?'—'What, madam! do not you know that ugliness and beauty exist only in opinion? Nothing is handsome, nothing ugly in itself. A beauty in one country is far from being reckoned beauty in another; so many men, so many minds.'—'You flatter me,' said Madam President, with a childish bashfulness, and pretending to blush; 'but I know, alas! but too well, that I have nothing beautiful in

me except my soul.'—'Very well; and is not the supreme beauty the only charm worthy to touch the heart?'—'Ah, philosopher! believe me, that beauty alone has few charms.'—'It has few, no doubt, for the vulgar; but, to repeat it once more, you are not reduced to that. Is there nothing in a noble air, a commanding look, and an expressive countenance? And then as to majesty, is she not the queen of the Graces?'—'And for this plumpness of mine, what say you to that?'—'Ah, madam! this plumpness, which is reckoned an excess among us, is a beauty in Asia. Do you think, for example, that the Turks have no skill in women? Well, then, all those elegant figures which we admire at Paris would not even be admitted into the Grand Seignor's seraglio; and the Grand Seignor is no fool. In a word, a rosy state of health is the mother of the pleasures, and plumpness is its symbol.'—'You will bring me presently to believe that my fat is not unbecoming. But for this nose of mine, nose without end, which runs out before my face.'—'Why, good God! what do you complain of? Were not the noses of the Roman matrons noses without end? Observe all the ancient busts.'—'But at least they had not this great mouth, and such blubber lips.'—'Thick lips, madam, are the charm of the American beauties: they are, as it were, two cushions, on which soft and tender pleasure takes its repose. As to a wide mouth, I know nothing that gives the countenance more openness and gaiety.'—'True, when the teeth are fine; but unhappily....'—'Go to Siam; there fine teeth are vulgar, and it is a scandal even to have any. Thus all that is called beauty depends on the caprice of mankind, and the only real beauty is the object which has charmed us.'—'Shall I be yours, then, my dear philosopher?' demanded she, hiding her face behind her fan. 'Pardon me, madam, if I hesitate. My delicacy renders me timid, and I profess a disinterestedness not yet suf-

ficiently known to you, to be above suspicion. You have talked to me of ten thousand crowns a year, and that circumstance makes me tremble.'—'Go, sir! you are too just to impute to me such mean suspicions; it is Clarissa that detains you; I see your evasions; leave me.'—'Yes, I leave you, to go and acquit myself of the promise I have just made to Cleon. He was dismissed; he complained to me of it, and I have promised him to engage Clarissa to give him her hand. Now believe that I love her.'—'Is it possible? Oh, you charm me! and I cannot stand this sacrifice. Go and see her; I wait you here; do not let me languish: this very evening we will leave the country.'

'I wonder at myself,' said he, as he was going off, 'for having the courage to marry her. She is frightful; but she is rich.' He comes to Clarissa, finds her at her toilette, and Cleon along with her; who assumes, on seeing him, a dejected air. 'O, the handsome suit!' cried she. 'Come this way, that I may see you. It is quite delicious, is it not, Cleon? It was my choice.'—'I see it plainly, madam,' replied Cleon, with a melancholy air. 'Let us leave off this trifling,' interrupted the philosopher; 'I am come to clear myself of a crime of which I am accused, and to fulfil a serious duty. Cleon loves you, you love him; he has lost your heart, he tells me, and that I am the cause of it.'—'Yes, sir; and why all this mystery? I have just been making a declaration of it to him.'—'And I, madam, declare to you, that I will never make unhappy a worthy man, who merits you, and dies if he loses you. I love you as much as he can love you: it is a confession which I am not ashamed to make; but his inclination has been more rooted by the unconquerable force of habit than mine, and perhaps also I shall find in myself resources which he has not in himself.'—'O! the wonderful man!' cried Cleon, embracing the philosopher. 'What shall I say to you? You confound me.'—'There is

no mighty matter in all this,' replied the philosopher with humility: 'your generosity set the example, I only imitate you.'—'Come, ladies,' said Clarissa to Lucinda and Doris, whom she saw appear at that instant, 'come and be witnesses of the triumph of philosophy. Aristus resigns me to his rival, and sacrifices his love for me to the happiness of a man he hardly knows.' Their astonishment and admiration were acted up to the life; and Aristus, taking Clarissa's hand, which he put into Cleon's, snuffed up in abundance, with a supercilious modesty, the incense of adoration. 'Be happy,' said he to them, 'and cease your astonishment at an effort, which, however painful, carries its recompense along with it. What would a philosopher be, if virtue were not all in all with him?' At these words he retired, as it were, to withdraw himself from his glory.

Madam President waited the philosopher's coming. 'Is it done, then?' demanded she of him. 'Yes, madam, they are united; I am now my own and yours.'—'O, I triumph: you are mine. Come here, then, that I may enchain you.'—'Ah, madam!' said he, falling at her knees, 'what dominion you have acquired over me! O, Socrates! O, Plato! what is become of your disciple? Do you yet know him in this state of abasement?' While he spoke thus, Madam President took a rose-coloured riband, which she bound about the sage's neck, and imitating Lucinda in the *Oracle**, with the most comical infantine air in the world, called him by the name of *Charmer*. 'Good heaven! what would become of me if any body knew.... Ah, madam!' said he, 'let us fly, let us banish ourselves from a society that watches us; spare me the humiliation.'—'What is it you call humiliation? I must have you glory in their presence that you are

* A farce.

mine, and that you wear my chain.' At these words the door opens, and Madam President rises from her chair, holding the philosopher in a string. 'See here,' said she to the company, 'see here this proud man, who sighs at my feet for the beauty of my purse: I deliver him up to you; I have played my part.' At this picture the roof resounded with the name of *Charmer*, and innumerable peals of laughter. Aristus, tearing his hair, and rending his clothes with rage, launched out into reproaches on the perfidy of women, and went off to compose a book against the age, in which he roundly asserted that there was no sage but himself.

THE BAD MOTHER.

AMONG the monstrous productions of nature, may be reckoned the heart of a mother who loves one of her children to the exclusion of all the rest. I do not mean an enlightened tenderness, which distinguishes among the young plants which it cultivates that which yields the best returns to its early care; I speak of a blind fondness, frequently exclusive, sometimes jealous, which creates an idol and victims amid the little innocents brought into the world, for each of whom we are equally bound to soften the burthen of life. Of this error, so common and so shameful to human nature, I am now going to give an example.

In one of our maritime provinces, M. de Carandon, an intendant, who had rendered himself respectable by his severity in repressing grievances, making it a principle to favour the weak, and control the strong, died poor, and almost insolvent. He had left behind him a daughter, whom nobody would marry, because she had much pride, little beauty, and no fortune. At last, a rich and honest merchant made his addresses to her, out of respect to the memory of her father. 'He has done us so many good offices,' said the worthy Corée (this was the merchant's name), 'it is but just that some of us should repay them to the daughter.' With these thoughts Corée offered himself in an humble manner, and Mademoiselle Carandon, with a great deal of reluctance, consented to give him her hand, on condition that she should maintain an absolute authority in his house. The good man's respect for the memory of the father extended even to the daughter: he consulted her as his oracle; and if at any time he happened to differ in opinion from her,

she had nothing to do but to utter these silencing expressions, 'The late M. de Carandon, my father . . .' Corée never waited for her to conclude, before he confessed himself in the wrong.

He died rather young, and left her two children, of which she had condescended to permit him to be the father. On his deathbed he thought it his duty to regulate the partition of his effects; but M. de Carandon held it, as she told him, for a maxim, that in order to retain children under the dependance of a mother, it was necessary to render her the dispenser of their effects. This law was the rule of Corée's will; and his inheritance was left in the hands of his wife, with the fatal right of distributing it to her children as she should think proper. Of these two children the eldest was her delight; not that he was handsomer, or of a more happy disposition, than the younger, but because she had ran some danger of her life in bringing him into the world; he had first made her experience the pains and joy of child-bed; he had possessed himself of her tenderness, which he also seemed to have exhausted; she had, in short, all the bad reasons that a bad mother could have for loving only him.

Little Jemmy was the rejected child: his mother hardly vouchsafed to see him, and never spoke to him but to chide him. The poor child, intimidated, durst not look up before her, nor answer her without trembling. He had, she said, his father's disposition, a vulgar soul, and the air of such kind of folks.

As to the eldest, whom she had taken care to render as headstrong, disobedient, and humoursome as possible, he was gentility itself: his obstinacy was called greatness of spirit; his humours excess of sensibility. She was delighted to see that he would never give up a point when he was in the right; and you must know that he was never in the wrong. She was eternally declaring that he knew his own good, and that he had the honour

of resembling the sweet madam his mamma. This eldest boy, who was styled M. de l'Etang (for it was not thought right to leave him the name of Corée), had masters of all sorts: the lessons they set were for him alone, but little Jemmy reaped the fruit of them; insomuch that at the end of a few years Jemmy knew all that they had taught M. de l'Etang, who knew nothing at all.

The good women, who make a practice of attributing to children all the little wit they have themselves, and who ruminate all morning on the pretty things they are to say in the day, had made the mother, whose weakness they were well acquainted with, believe that her eldest son was a prodigy. The masters, less complaisant, or less artful, while they complained of the indocility and inattention of this favourite, were boundless in their encomiums on Jemmy: they did not absolutely say that M. de l'Etang was a blockhead, but they said that little Jemmy had the genius of an angel. The mother's vanity was wounded, and out of an injustice, which one would not believe existed in nature, if this vice of mothers were less in fashion, she redoubled her aversion to the little wretch, became jealous of his improvement, and resolved to take away from her spoiled child the humiliation of a comparison.

A very affecting adventure awakened, however, in her the sentiments of nature; but this retort upon herself only humbled, without correcting her. Jemmy was ten years of age, M. de l'Etang near fifteen, when she fell dangerously ill. The eldest employed himself about his pleasures, and very little about his mother's health. It is the punishment of foolish mothers to love unnatural children. However, she began to grow uneasy; Jemmy perceived it, and his little heart was seized with grief and fear: the impatience to see his mother grew too strong for him to conceal. They had accustomed him never to appear but when he was called; but

at last his tenderness gave him courage. He seized the instant when the chamber door was half open, entered silent and with trembling steps, and approached his mother's bed. 'Is it you, my son?' said she. 'No, mamma; it is Jemmy.' This natural and overwhelming answer penetrated with shame and grief the soul of this unjust woman; but a few caresses from her bad son soon restored him to his full ascendancy; and Jemmy, in the end, was neither the better beloved, nor reckoned the more worthy to be so.

Scarce was Madam Corée recovered, when she resumed the design of banishing him her house; her pretence was, that M. de l'Etang being naturally lively, was too susceptible of dissipation to have a companion in his studies; and the impertinent prepossessions of the masters for the child, who was the most humble and fawning with them, might easily discourage the other, whose spirit being higher, and less tractable, required more management: it was her pleasure, therefore, that l'Etang should be the only object of their cares, and she got rid of the unfortunate Jemmy, by exiling him to a college.

At sixteen l'Etang quitted his masters in the mathematics, physics, music, &c. just as he had taken them: he began his exercises, which he performed much in the same manner as he had done his studies; and at twenty he appeared in the world with the self-sufficiency of a coxcomb, who has heard of every thing, but reflected on nothing.

Jemmy, on his part, had gone through his studies; and his mother was quite wearied with the commendations they gave him. 'Well, then,' said she, 'since he is so wise, he will succeed in the church; he has nothing to do but to take to that course of life.'

Unfortunately Jemmy had no inclination for the ecclesiastical state; he came therefore to entreat his mother to dispense with his entering into it.

'You imagine, then,' said she to him with a cold and severe air, 'that I have enough to maintain you in the world? I assure you I have not. Your father's fortune was not so considerable as was imagined; it will scarce be sufficient to settle your elder brother. For your part, you have only to consider whether you will run the career of benefices or of arms; whether you will have your head shaven or broken; in short, whether you will take a band or a lieutenancy of infantry: this is all that I can do for you.' Jemmy answered her with respect, that there were less violent courses to be taken by the son of a merchant. At these words Mad. de Carandon was near dying with grief for having brought into the world a son so little worthy of her, and forbid him her sight. Young Corée, distressed at having incurred his mother's anger, retired sighing, and resolved to try whether fortune would be less cruel to him than nature. He learnt that a vessel was on the point of sailing for the Antilles, whither he had a design of repairing. He writ to his mother to ask her consent, her blessing, and a parcel of goods. The two first articles were amply granted him, but the latter very sparingly.

His mother, too happy in being rid of him, wanted to see him before his departure; and while she embraced him, bestowed on him a few tears. His brother also had the goodness to wish him a good voyage. These were the first caresses he had ever received from his relations; his sensible heart was penetrated with them: yet he durst not ask them to write to him: but he had a fellow collegian, by whom he was tenderly beloved; and he conjured him, at parting, now and then to send him news of his mother.

She was now only employed in the care of settling her favourite son. He declared for the robe: they obtained him a dispensation from its studies; and he was soon admitted into the sanctuary of the laws. Nothing remained wanting but an advan-

tageous marriage; they proposed a rich heiress; but they required of the widow the settlement of her fortune. She had the weakness to consent to it, scarce reserving to herself sufficient to live decently; well assured that her son's fortune would be always at her disposal.

At the age of twenty-five, M. de l'Etang found himself a dapper little counsellor, neglecting his wife as much as his mother, taking great care of his own person, and paying very little regard to the bar. As it was genteel for a husband to have somebody besides his wife, l'Etang thought it his duty to set up for a man of intrigue. A young girl, whom he ogled at the play, returned his invitations, received him at her lodgings with a great deal of politeness, told him he was charming, which he very readily believed, and in a short time eased him of a pocket-book with ten thousand crowns. But as there is no such a thing as eternal love, this perjured beauty quitted him at the expiration of three months for a young English lord, equally foolish, and more magnificent. L'Etang, who could not conceive how they could dismiss such a person as himself, resolved to avenge himself by taking a mistress still more celebrated, and loading her with favours. His new conquest raised him a thousand rivals; and when he compared himself with a crowd of adorers who sighed for her in vain, he had the pleasure of thinking himself more amiable, as he found himself more happy. However, having perceived that he was not without uneasiness, she was desirous of convincing him that there was nothing in the world which she was not resolved to quit for him, and proposed, for the sake of avoiding impertinents, that they should go together to Paris, to forget all the world, and live only for each other. L'Etang was transported at this mark of tenderness. Every thing is got ready for the journey; they set out, they arrive, and choose their retreat in the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal. Fatima (that

was the name of this beauty) asked and obtained, without difficulty, a coach to take the air. L'Etang was surprised at the number of friends that he found in this good city. These friends had never seen him; but his merit attracted them in crowds. Fatima received none but l'Etang's company, and he was always very sure of his friends and of her. This charming woman had, however, one weakness: she believed in dreams. One night she had one which could not, she said, be effaced from her memory. L'Etang wanted to know this dream which engaged her attention so seriously. 'I dreamed,' said she, 'that I was in a delicious apartment. In it was a damask bed of three different colours, with tapestry and sofas suited to this superb bed; pannels dazzling with gold, polished cabinets, porcelain of Japan, China monkies, the prettiest in the world; but all this was nothing. A toilette was ready set out; I drew near it; what did I see? My heart beats at it! a casket of diamonds; and what diamonds! the most beautiful aigrette, the finest ear-rings, the handsomest esclavage, and a river without end. I am sure, sir, something very extraordinary will happen to me. This dream has affected me very strongly, and my dreams never deceive me.'

It was in vain that M. de l'Etang employed all his eloquence to persuade her that dreams signified nothing; she maintained that this dream did signify something, and, at length, he feared lest some of his rivals should propose to realise it. He was under a necessity, therefore, of capitulating, and, except in some few circumstances, resolved to accomplish it himself. We may easily judge that this experiment did not cure her of dreaming: she took a delight in it, and dreamed so often, that even the fortune of good master Corée became hardly any thing more than a dream. M. de l'Etang's young wife, to whom this journey had not been very agreeable, demanded to be separated from

the fortunes of a husband who abandoned her; and her portion, which he was obliged to restore, put him still less at his ease.

Play is a resource. L'Etang pretended to excel at piquet: his friends, who made up a common purse, all betted for him, while one of them played against him. Every time that he threw out, 'Faith,' saith one of the betters, 'that is well played!'—'There is no playing better,' said another. In short, M. de l'Etang played the best in the world; but he never had the aces. While they insensibly stripped him, the faithful Fatima, who perceived his decline, dreamed one night that she quitted him, and left him the next day: however, as it is mortifying to fall off, he piqued himself upon his honour, and would not abate any thing of his grandeur, so that in a few years he was ruined.

He was now at his last shifts, when the good lady his mother, who had not managed her own reserve better, wrote to him to desire some money. He returned her answer, that he was very sorry, but that, far from being able to send her any relief, he stood in need of it himself. The alarm was already spread among the creditors, and the question was, who should first seize the ruins of their fortune. 'What have I done!' said the distracted mother: 'I have stripped myself of all for a son who has squandered every thing.'

In the mean time what became of the unfortunate Jemmy? Jemmy, with a good understanding, the best heart, the handsomest figure in the world, and his little venture, was happily arrived at St. Domingo. It is well known how easy a Frenchman of good morals, and a good person, finds it to establish himself in the isles. The name of Corée, his own good sense and prudence, soon acquired him the confidence of the inhabitants. With the assistances that were offered him, he purchased himself a settlement, cultivated it, and rendered it flourishing; trade, which was then very brisk, en-

riched him in a short time, and in the space of five years he was become the object of the jealousy of the handsomest and richest widows and damsels of the colony. But alas! his fellow collegian, who till that time had given him none but the most satisfactory news, now sent him word that his brother was ruined, and that his mother, abandoned by every body, was driven to the most dreadful extremities. This fatal letter was bedewed with tears. 'Ah, my poor mother!' cried he, 'I will fly to your relief.' He would not trust this charge to any body. Accident, infidelity, neglect, or delay, might deprive her of the assistance sent by her son, and leave her to perish in indigence and despair. 'Nothing ought to retain a son,' said he to himself, 'when the honour and life of a mother are at stake.'

With these sentiments, Corée was only employed in the care of rendering his riches portable. He sold all his possessions, and this sacrifice cost him nothing; but he could not but feel some regret for a more precious treasure he left in America. Lucella, the young widow of an old colonist, who had left her immense riches, had cast upon Corée one of those looks which seem to penetrate to the bottom of the soul, and to unravel its character; one of those looks which decide the opinion, determine the inclination, and the sudden and confused effect of which is generally taken for a sympathetic emotion. She had imagined she saw in this young man every thing that could render a virtuous and sensible woman happy; and her love for him had not waited for reflection to give it birth, and discover itself. Corée, on his side, had distinguished her among her rivals, as the most worthy of captivating the heart of a wise and virtuous man. Lucella, with a figure the most noble and interesting; an air the most animated, and yet the most modest; a brown complexion, but fresher than the rose; hair of the blackness of ebony, and teeth of a dazzling

whiteness and enamel; the stature and gait of one of Diana's nymphs; the smile and look of the companions of Venus; Lucella, with all these charms, was endowed with that greatness of spirit, that loftiness of temper, that justness in her ideas, that rectitude in her sentiments, which makes us say, though not with the greatest propriety, that such a woman has the soul of a man. It was not one of Lucella's principles to be ashamed of a virtuous inclination. Scarce had Corée confessed to her the choice of his heart, when he obtained from her, without evasion, a like confession, by way of reply; and their mutual inclination becoming more tender, in proportion as it became more considered, now wanted nothing but to be consecrated at the altar. Some disputes, concerning the inheritance of Lucella's husband, had retarded their happiness. These disputes were on the point of being settled, when the letter from Corée's friend arrived, to tear him all at once from what he held dearest in the world, except his mother. He repaired to the beauteous widow's, showed her the letter from his friend, and asked her advice. 'I flatter myself,' said she, 'that you have no need of it. Convert your wealth into mercantile commodities, hasten to the relief of your mother, pay your respects to all your friends, and come back again: my fortune awaits you. If I die, my will shall secure it to you; if I live, instead of a will, you know what right you will have over it.' Corée, struck with gratitude and admiration, seized the hands of this generous woman, and bathed them with his tears; but as he was launching out in encomiums on her, 'Go,' said she to him, 'you are a child: entertain not the prejudices of Europe. The moment that a woman does any thing tolerably handsome, they cry her up as a prodigy, as if nature had not given us a soul. Should you, in my place now, be much pleased to see me in astonishment, and viewing in you as a phenomenon the pure emotion of a good

heart?'—'Pardon me,' said Corée, 'I ought to have expected it; but your principles, your sentiments, the ease, the simplicity of your virtues enchant me: I admire them without being amazed at them.'—'Go, my dear,' said she to him, saluting him; 'I am thine, such as God has made me. Do your duty, and return as soon as possible.'

He embarks, and with him he embarks all his fortune. The passage was pretty favourable till they came towards the Canaries; but there their vessel, pursued by a Corsair from Morocco, was obliged to seek for safety in its sails. The corsair which chased them was on the point of joining them; and the captain, terrified at the danger of being boarded, was going to strike to the pirate. 'Oh, my dear mother!' cried Corée, embracing the casket in which were contained all his hopes, and then tearing his hair with grief and rage. 'No,' said he, 'this barbarous African shall have my heart first.' Then addressing himself to the captain, the crew, and the affrighted passengers, 'What! my friends,' said he, 'shall we surrender ourselves like cowards? Shall we suffer this robber to carry us to Morocco, loaded with irons; and to sell us like beasts? Are we disarmed? Are the people on board the enemy's ship invulnerable? or are they braver than we? They want to board us; let them! what then? we shall have them the nearer.' His courage reanimated their spirits, and the captain, embracing him, extolled him for having set the example.

Every thing is now got ready for defence: the corsair boards them: the vessels dash against each other: death flies on both sides. In a short time the two ships are covered with a cloud of smoke and fire. The cannonade ceases; daylight appears, and the sword singles out its victims. Corée, sabre in hand, made a dreadful slaughter; the instant he saw an African throw himself on board, he ran up to him, and cleaved him in two, crying out,

'Oh! my poor mother!' His fury was as that of the lioness defending her little ones; it was the last effort of nature in despair; and the gentlest, the most sensible heart that ever existed, was now become the most violent and bloody. The captain discerned him every where, his eye flashing fire, and his arm drenched in blood. 'This is not a mortal,' said he to his companion, 'it is a god who fights for us. His example kindled their courage. He finds himself at length hand to hand with the chief of the barbarians. 'My God,' cried he, 'have pity on my mother!' and at these words, with a back-handed blow, he let out the pirate's bowels. From this moment the victory was decisive: the few who were left of the crew of the corsair begged their lives, and were put in irons. Corée's vessel, with her booty, arrives at length on the coast of France; and this worthy son, without allowing himself one night's repose, repairs with his treasure to his unhappy mother. He finds her on the brink of the grave, and in a state more dreadful than death itself; stripped of all relief, and in the care of one man-servant; who, disgusted at suffering the indigence to which she was reduced, paid her, with regret, the last duties of an humiliating pity. The shame of her situation had induced her to forbid this servant from admitting any person, except the priest and the charitable physician, who sometimes visited her. Corée asks to see her, and is refused.

'Tell my name,' said he to the servant. 'And what is your name?'—'Jemmy.' The servant approaches the bed. 'A stranger,' says he, 'asks to see you, madam.'—'Alas! and who is this stranger?'—'He says that his name is Jemmy.' At this name her heart was so violently agitated, that she was near expiring. 'Ah! my son,' said she in a faint voice, and lifting upon him her dying eyelids. 'Ah! my son, at what a moment are you returned to see your mother! Your hand will soon close her

eyes.' What was the grief of this pious and tender child, to see that mother whom he had left in the bosom of luxury and opulence, to see her now in a bed surrounded with rags, the very description of which would make the stomach rise, if it were permitted me to give it! 'Oh! my mother,' cried he, throwing himself upon this bed of woe: his sobs choked his voice, and the rivers of tears with which he bathed the bosom of his expiring mother, were for a long time the only expression of his grief and love. 'Heaven punishes me,' replied she, 'for having loved too much an unnatural son; for having . . . .' He interrupted her: 'All is atoned for, my dear mother,' said this virtuous young man; 'live:—Fortune has loaded me with her favours; I come to pour them into the lap of Nature: it is for you that they are given me: Live;—I have enough to make you love life.'—'Ah! my dear child, if I have any desire to live, it is to expiate my injustice, it is to love a son of whom I was not worthy, a son whom I have deprived of his inheritance.' At these words she covered her face as unworthy to see the light. 'Ah! madam,' cried he, pressing her in his arms, 'deprive me not of the sight of my mother. I am come across the seas to seek and relieve her.' At this instant arrive the priest and physician. 'See there,' said she, 'my child, the only comforter that Heaven has left me; without their charity I should now be no more.' Corée embraces them, bursting into tears. 'My friends!' says he to them, 'my benefactors! what do I not owe you! but for you I should no longer have had a mother: go on; recal her to life. I am rich; I am come to make her happy. Redouble your cares, your consolations, your assistances; restore her to me.' The physician prudently saw that this situation was too violent for the sick lady. 'Go, sir,' said he to Corée, 'trust in our zeal, and think of nothing but to provide her a convenient and wholesome lodg-

ing; to which the lady shall this evening be removed.'

Change of air, proper nourishment, or rather the revolution created by joy, and the calm which succeeded it, insensibly reanimated the organs of life. A profound chagrin had been the ground of the disease; consolation was the remedy. Corée learnt that his unhappy brother had just perished in misery. I draw a veil over the frightful picture of his death, which he had but too justly merited. They kept the knowledge of it from a feeling mother, who was as yet too weak to support, without expiring, a new attack of grief. She learnt it at last, when her health was better established. All the wounds of her heart were now opened afresh, and the maternal tears trickled from her eyes. But Heaven, while it took away from her a son unworthy of her tenderness, restored her one who had merited it by every sensible and touching tie of nature and virtue. He confided to her the desires of his soul, which were to embrace at once his mother and his wife. Madam Corée seized with joy the opportunity of going over with her son to America. A city filled with her follies and misfortunes was to her an odious place of residence; and the moment in which she embarked restored her a new life. Heaven, which protects piety, granted them a favourable passage. Lucella received the mother of her lover as she would have received her own. Hymen made of these lovers the happiest couple, and their days still roll on in that unalterable peace, in those pure and serene pleasures, which are the portion of virtue.

THE GOOD MOTHER.

THE care of a mother for her children is of all duties the most religiously observed. This universal sentiment governs all the passions; it prevails even over the love of life. It renders the fiercest of animals sensible and gentle, the most sluggish indefatigable, the most timid, courageous to excess: not one of them loses sight of its little ones, till the moment that their care becomes useless. We see only among mankind the odious examples of a too early desertion.

In the midst of a world, where vice, ingenious to disguise itself, takes a thousand seducing forms; it is there, above all, that the most happy disposition requires to be enlightened without ceasing. The more shelves there are, and the more they are hidden, the more need has the frail bark of innocence and happiness of a prudent pilot. What would have been, for example, the fate of Miss Troëne, if Heaven had not made expressly for her a mother, who was one of ten thousand?

This respectable widow had devoted to the education of an only daughter the most agreeable years of her life. These were her reflections at the age of five-and-twenty.

'I have lost my husband,' said she; 'I have nothing but my daughter and myself: shall I live for myself, or shall I live for her? The world smiles upon me, and pleases me still; but if I give myself up to it, I abandon my daughter, and hazard her happiness and my own. Suppose that a life of noise and dissipation has all the charms that are attributed to it, how long may I be able to taste them? How few of my years, which are rolling on, have I to pass in the world? how many

in solitude and the bosom of my child? This world, which invites me now, will dismiss me soon without pity; and if my daughter should forget herself, according to my example; if she is unhappy through my negligence, what will be my comfort? Let me in good time add grace to my retreat: let me render it as agreeable as it is honourable; and let me sacrifice to my daughter, who is every thing to me, that alien multitude, to whom in a short time I shall be nothing.'

From that moment this prudent mother became the friend and companion of her daughter. But to obtain her confidence was not the work of a day.

Emily (that was the young lady's name) had received from nature a soul susceptible of the most lively impressions; and her mother, who studied it incessantly, experienced an uneasy joy on perceiving this sensibility, which does so much harm and so much good. 'Happy,' said she sometimes, 'happy the husband whom she will love, if he is deserving of her tenderness; if, by esteem and friendship, he knows how to render dear to her the cares she shall take to please him! but woe be to him, if he humbles and shocks her: her wounded delicacy will be the torment of them both. I see that if a reproach escapes even me, a slight complaint which she has not merited, tears of grief trickle from her eyes; her drooping heart is dispirited. Nothing is easier than to soothe her, nothing easier than to frighten her.'

Temperate as was the life of Madam du Troëne, it was however conformable to her condition, and relative to the design she had of instructing herself at leisure in the choice of a husband worthy of Emily. A crowd of admirers, caught with the charms of the daughter, paid, according to custom, assiduous court to the mother. Of this number was the Marquis de Verglan, who, to his own misfortune, was endowed with a very handsome figure. His glass and the ladies had so often told him so,

that he could not but believe it. He listened to them with pleasure, contemplated himself with delight, smiled upon himself, and was eternally singing his own praises. Nothing could be objected to his politeness; but it was so cold, and so slight, in comparison to the attentions with which he honoured himself, that one might clearly perceive that he possessed the first place in his own esteem. He would have had, without thinking of them, all the graces of nature: he spoiled them all by affecting them. In regard to understanding, he wanted only justness, or rather reflection. Nobody would have talked better than he, if he had known what he was going to say; but it was his first care to be of an opinion contrary to that of another. Right or wrong, was all one to him; he was sure of dazzling, of seducing, of persuading to whatever he would. He knew by heart all that little toilette chit-chat, all those pretty things which mean nothing. He was thoroughly versed in all the love anecdotes of the city and court: who was the gallant of yesterday, who of to-day, who of the morrow; and how many times in the year such and such a lady had changed her admirers. He even knew a certain person who had refused to be upon the list, and who would have supplanted all his rivals, if he had chosen to give himself the trouble.

This young coxcomb was the son of an old friend of M. du Troëne, and the widow spoke of him to her daughter with a kind of compassion. 'It is a pity,' said she, 'that they spoil this young man: he is of a good family, and might have succeeded:' he had already succeeded but too well in the heart of Emily. That which is ridiculous in the eyes of a mother, is not always so in the eyes of a daughter. Youth is indulgent to youth; and there are such things as beautiful defects.

Verglan, on his side, thought Emily tolerably handsome, only a little too plain and simple; but that might be corrected. He took but very little

care to please her; but when the first impression is made, every thing contributes to sink it deeper. The very dissipation of this young fop was a new attraction to Emily, as it threatened her with the danger of losing him: and nothing hastens, so much as jealousy, the progress of a growing love.

In giving an account of his life to Madame du Troëne, Verglan represented himself (as to be sure he ought) the most desirable man in the world.

Madam du Troëne dropt a hint concerning modesty; but he protested that nobody was less vain than himself; that he knew perfectly well that it was not for his own sake that they sought him; that his birth did a great deal, and that he owed the rest to his wit and figure, qualities which he had not given himself, and which he was far from being proud of.

The more pleasure Emily felt in seeing and hearing him, the more care she took to conceal it. A reproach from her mother would have touched her to the heart; and this delicate sensibility rendered her fearful to excess.

In the mean time, Emily's charms, with which Verglan was so faintly touched, had inspired the discreet and modest Belzors with the tenderest passion. A just way of thinking, and an upright heart, formed the basis of his character. His agreeable and open figure was still more ennobled by the high idea that was conceived of his soul; for we are naturally disposed to seek, and believe that we discover, in the features of a man, what we know to be in his heart.

Belzors, in whom nature had been directed to virtue from his infancy, enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being able to give himself up to it without precaution and constraint. Decency, honesty, candour, a frankness which gains confidence, together with a severity of manners which creates respect, had in him the free ease of habit. An enemy to vice, without pride; indulgent to

follies, without contracting any; complying with innocent customs, incorruptible by bad examples, he swam upon the torrent of the world: beloved, respected, even by those to whom his life was a reproach, and to whom the public esteem delighted to oppose it, in order to humble their pride.

Madam du Troëne, charmed with the character of this young man, had secretly pitched upon him, as the most deserving husband she could give her daughter. She was inexhaustible in his commendations; and while Emily applauded with the modesty of her age, Madam du Troëne mistook the ingenuous and agreeable air which her daughter assumed towards him; for as the esteem with which Belzors inspired her was not mingled with any sentiment that she needed to conceal, Emily was quite at her ease.

It were to be wished, that she had been as free and as tranquil with the dangerous Verglan; though the painful situation into which his presence cast her had in good measure the appearance of spleen. If Madam du Troëne spoke in commendation of him, Emily looked down, and kept silence. 'You do not seem to me, daughter,' said Madam du Troëne, 'to relish those light and shining graces, on which the world lays so much stress.'—'I know nothing at all of them,' said Emily, blushing. The good mother concealed her joy: she thought she saw the plain and modest virtues of Belzors triumphing in Emily's heart over the little brilliant vices of Verglan, and those of his character; till an accident, slight in appearance, but striking to an attentive and discerning mother, drew her out of this illusion.

One of Emily's accomplishments was drawing. She had chosen the delineation of flowers, as the most suitable to her age: for what can be more natural than to see a rose blow beneath the hand of beauty! Verglan, by a taste somewhat resem-

bling hers, was passionately fond of flowers; and he never appeared without a nosegay, the prettiest in the world.

One day Madam du Troëne's eyes were thrown casually on Verglan's nosegay. The day after, she perceived that Emily, perhaps without thinking of it, was drawing the flowers of it. It was natural enough, that the flowers she had seen the evening before should be still present to her imagination, and come, as it were, of their own accord, to offer themselves to her pencil: but that which was not quite so natural, was the air of enthusiasm which she betrayed in drawing them. Her eyes sparkled with the fire of genius; her mouth smiled amorously at every stroke of the pencil, and a colour more animated than that of the flowers, which she was endeavouring to delineate, diffused itself over her cheeks. 'Are you pleased with your execution?' said the mother to her carelessly. 'It is impossible,' replied Emily, 'to represent Nature well, when we have her not before our eyes.' It was certain, however, that she had never copied her more faithfully.

Some few days after, Verglan came again with new flowers. Madam du Troëne, without any particularity, observed them one after another; and, in Emily's next lesson, Verglan's nosegay was drawn again. The good mother continued her observations, and every trial confirming her suspicions, redoubled her uneasiness. 'After all,' said she, 'I am alarmed perhaps at somewhat very innocent. Let me see, however, if she has any meaning in all this.'

The studies and accomplishments of Emily were a secret to her mother's acquaintance. As she had only intended to make her relish solitude, and preserve her imagination from the dangers of meditation, and the tediousness of idleness; Madam du Troëne derived neither to herself nor daughter,

the least vanity from those talents which she had cultivated with so much care. But one day when they were alone with Belsors, and the conversation turned on the great advantage of employing and amusing one's self, 'My daughter,' said Madam du Troëne, 'has created herself an amusement, which she relishes more and more. I want to have you see some of her designs.' Emily opened her portfolio; and Belsors, charmed, was never weary of admiration of her performances. 'How soft and pure,' said he, 'are the pleasures of innocence! In vain does vice torment itself, it will never taste the like. Is it not true, madam, that the hour of labour passes away quick? And yet you have fixed it: see it here retraced and produced anew to your eyes. Time is never lost but to the idle.' Madam du Troëne listened with a secret complaceney. Emily thought his observations very sensible, but was not in the least touched by them.

Some days after, Verglan came to see them. 'Do you know, sir,' says Madam du Troëne, 'that my daughter has received the highest encomiums from Belsors on her talents for drawing? I want your opinion of it.' Emily, in confusion, blushed, hesitated, said that she had nothing finished by her, and beseeched her mother to wait till she should have some piece fit to be seen. She did not doubt but her mother was laying a snare for her. 'Since there is a mystery in this, there is also a design,' said this discerning mother within herself: 'she is afraid that Verglan may know his own flowers, and penetrate into the secret motive of the pleasure which she has taken in drawing them. My daughter loves this young fop; my fears were but too well founded.'

Madam du Troëne, solicited on all sides, excused herself still on account of Emily's youth, and the resolution she had taken not to constrain her in her choice. However, this choice alarmed

her. 'My daughter,' said she, 'is going to prefer Verglan: there is at least room to think so; and this young man has every quality that can render a woman unhappy. If I declare my will to Emily, if I only suffer her to have the slightest perception of it, she will make it a law to subscribe to it, without murmuring: she will marry a man whom she does not love, and the remembrance of the man she loves will haunt her even in the arms of another. I know her soul; she will become the victim of her duty. But shall I ordain this grievous sacrifice? God forbid! No: let her own inclination decide it: but I may direct her inclination by enlightening it, and that is the only lawful use of the authority that is given me. I am certain of the goodness of heart, of the justness of my daughter's sentiments; let me supply, by the light natural to my years, the inexperience of hers; let her see by her mother's eyes, and fancy, if possible, that she consults only her own inclination.'

Every time that Verglan and Belzors met together at Madam du Troëne's, she turned the conversation on the manners, customs, and maxims of the world. She encouraged contradiction; and, without taking any side, gave their dispositions room to display themselves. Those little adventures with which society abounds, and which entertain the idle curiosity of the circles at Paris, most commonly furnished matter for their reflections. Verglan, light, decisive, and lively, was constantly on the side of the fashion. Belzors, in a modester tone, constantly defended the cause of morality with a noble freedom.

The arrangement of Count d'Auberive with his lady was at that time the town talk. It was said, that after a pretty brisk quarrel, and bitter complaints on both sides, on the subject of their mutual infidelity, they agreed that they owed each other nothing; that they had concluded by laughing at

the folly of being jealous without loving; that d'Auberive had consented to see the Chevalier de Clange make love to his wife; and that she had promised, on her side, to receive with the greatest politeness the Marchioness de Talbe, to whom d'Auberive paid his court; that the peace had been ratified by a supper, and that two couple of lovers never maintained a better understanding with each other.

At this recital Verglan cried out, that nothing was wiser. 'They talk of the good old times,' said he; 'let them produce an instance of the manners of our forefathers comparable to this. Formerly an instance of infidelity set a family in flames; they shut up, they beat their wives. If the husband made use of the liberty that was reserved to him, his sad and faithful half was obliged to put up with the injury, and vent her moans at home, as in an obscure prison. If she imitated her wandering husband, it was with terrible risks. Nothing less than her lover's and her own life were at stake. They had the folly to attach the honour of the man to the virtue of his wife; and the husband, who was not the less a fine gentleman for intriguing elsewhere himself, became the ridiculous object of public contempt on the first false step of his lady. Upon honour, I do not conceive how, in these barbarous ages, they had the courage to marry. The bands of Hymen were then downright chains. Now-a-days, complaisance, freedom, peace, reign in the bosom of families. If the married pair love one another, so much the better; they live together, they are happy. If they cease to love, they tell it like well-bred persons, and dispense with each other's promise of fidelity. They give over being lovers, and become friends. These are what I call social manners, free and easy. This makes one long to be married.'—'You find it then quite easy,' said Madam du Troëne, 'for a wife to be the confidante of her husband, and for him to

be the complaisant friend of his wife?'—'To be sure, provided it be mutual. Is it not just to grant our confidence to those who honour us with theirs, and to render each other by turns the offices of friendship? Can a man have a better friend than his wife, or the wife a surer and more intimate friend than her husband? With whom shall we be free, if not with the person who, from situation, is one with us? And when unfortunately we no longer find any pleasure at home, what can be better than to seek it abroad, to return each at their own time, without jealousy and restraint?'

'Nothing is more pleasant,' said Belzors, 'than this new method; but you and I have a great deal of ground to go over before we can relish it. In the first place we must give up all love for ourselves, wife, and children: we must be able to accustom ourselves to consider, without repugnance, as being one half of one's self, somebody whom we despise sufficiently, to deliver up....'—'Well,' replied Verglan, 'what but mere prejudices are all these scruples? what hinders us from esteeming one another, if it be settled that there is no longer any scandal in it?'—'When that is settled,' said Belzors, 'all the ties of society are broken. The inviolable sanctity of the marriage tie forms the sanctity of all the ties of nature. Remember, my friend, that if there are no longer any sacred duties for the parents, there will no longer be any for the children. All these connexions depend on each other. Family quarrels were violent in the days of our fathers; but the mass of morals was sound, and the wound soon closed up again. At present it is a languishing body, wasting by a slow poison. On the other side, my dear Verglan, we have not now the idea of those pure and intimate pleasures which the married pair felt amidst their family, nor of that union which formed the delight of their youth, and the consolation of their advanced years. Now-a-days, when a mother is afflicted at the dis-

sipations of her son, or a father overwhelmed with any reverse of fortune, are they a refuge or support to each other? They are obliged to unbosom their grief abroad; and the consolation of strangers is very weak indeed.'

'You talk like an oracle, my sage Belzors,' said Verglan; 'but who has told you that two married persons would not do best to love, and to be faithful to each other all their lives? I am only, if unfortunately this mutual liking should cease, for their consoling each other, and settling matters amicably, without forbidding those who may have loved reciprocally from the times of our fathers to love on still, if their heart inclines them to it.'—'Ay,' said Madam du Troëne, 'what is there to hinder them?'—'What is there to hinder them, madam?' replied Belzors. 'Custom, example, the *bon ton*, the facility of living, without shame, according to their liking. Verglan will agree, that the life led in the world is agreeable: and change is naturally pleasing; our very weakness invites us to it. Who, then, will resist this inclination, if they take off the curb of morality?'—'I, I take off nothing,' said Verglan; 'but I am for every body's living according to their liking; and I very much approve of the course that d'Auberive and his lady have taken to overlook on both sides what is called injuries. If they are satisfied, every body else ought to be so too.'

As he finished these last words, a servant announced the Marquis d'Auberive. 'Ah, marquis! you come very opportunely,' said Verglan: 'tell us, prithee, if your story be true. They say that your lady forgives you your rhubarb, and that you pass by her senna.'—'Psha! what stuff!' said d'Auberive to him carelessly. 'I have maintained that nothing was more reasonable; but Belzors there condemns you without appeal.'—'Why so, pray? Would not he have done as much? My wife is young and handsome; a coquette; that is quite

evident. At the bottom, however, I believe her to be very virtuous; but though she should err a little, justice ought to take place. I conceive, however, that a person more jealous than myself may condemn me; but what astonishes me is, that Belsors should be the first. I have hitherto received nothing but commendations. Nothing is more natural than my proceedings; and all the world felicitate me upon it, as on something marvellous. It looks as if they did not think I had understanding enough to take a reasonable step. Upon honour, I am quite confounded at the compliments I receive on it. As to the rigid gentlemen, I honour them sufficiently; but I live for myself. Let every one do as much, and the happiest will always be the wisest.'—'Well, how is the marchioness?' said Madam du Troëne to him, with a design of changing the subject. 'Wonderfully well, madam; we supped together last night, and I never saw her in such good humour.'—'I will lay a wager,' says Verglan, 'that you will take her again some day.'—'Faith, very possibly; for yesterday, when we got up from table, I caught myself saying tender things to her.'

This first experiment made the most lively impression on Emily's understanding. Her mother, who perceived it, gave free course to her reflections; but in order to put her into the way, 'It is wonderful,' said she, 'how much opinions depend upon tempers. Here now these two young men, educated with the same care, both endued with the same principles of honesty and virtue; observe, however, how they differ from one another! and each of them believes he is in the right.' Emily's heart did its best to excuse in Verglan the fault of having defended the manners of the age. 'With what levity,' said she, 'do they treat modesty and fidelity! how they sport with what is most sacred in nature! and Verglan gives in to these irregularities! Why has he not the soul of Belsors?'

Some time after, Emily and her mother being at the play, Belzors and Verglan presented themselves at their box, and Madam du Troëne invited them both to take their seats there. The play was *Ines* *. The scene of the children gave Verglan an opportunity of uttering some *bons mots*, which he put off as excellent criticisms. Belzors, without listening to him, melted into tears, and took no pains to conceal it. His rival rallied him on his weakness. 'What!' said he to him, 'do children make you cry?'—'And what would you have me be affected by?' said Belzors. 'Yes, I confess I never hear without much emotion the tender names of father and mother; the pathos of nature penetrates me: even the most touching love interests me, moves me much less.' *Ines* was followed by *Nanine* †; and when they came to the catastrophe, 'Oh!' said Verglan, 'that is carrying the jest too far: let Dolban love this little wench, with all my heart; but to marry her, I think, is rather too much.'—'It is a folly, perhaps,' replied Belzors; 'but I feel myself capable of it: when virtue and beauty are united, I cannot answer for my discretion.' Not one of their observations escaped Madam du Troëne; Emily, still more attentive, blushed at the advantage which Belzors had over his rival. After the play, they saw the Chevalier d'Olcet pass by in weepers. 'What is the meaning of this, chevalier?' said Verglan to him with an air of gaiety. 'An old uncle,' replies d'Olcet, 'who has been so kind as to leave me ten thousand crowns a year.'—'Ten thousand crowns! I give you joy. This uncle was a brave old fellow. Ten thousand crowns! charming!' Belzors, embracing him in

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* *Ines de Castro*, from which Mallet's *Elvira* is taken.

† A petit piece of Voltaire; the story somewhat like *Pamela*.

his turn, said to him, 'Chevalier, I condole with you on his death: I know that you think too justly to conceive any unnatural joy on the occasion.'—'He has long been as a father to me,' said the chevalier, confounded at the pleasant air he had assumed; 'but he was so old, you know!'—'That is a cause for patience,' replied Belsors mildly, 'but not for consolation. A good relation is the best of friends; and the riches he has left you are not equal to the value of such a one.'—'An old uncle is but a dull kind of friend,' said Verglan; 'and it is a rule that every one must live in his turn. Young folks would be much to be pitied, if old fellows were immortal.' Belsors changed the discourse, in order to spare Verglan a humiliating reply. At every stroke of this contrast, Emily's heart was cruelly torn. Madam du Troëne saw with joy the respectful and sensible air she assumed towards Belsors, and the cold and chagrined air with which she replied to Verglan's compliments; but in order to bring about another trial, she invited them both to supper.

They played at cards. Verglan and Belsors had a *tête-à-tête* at trictrac. Verglan liked nothing but high play; Belsors would play for as little as you pleased. The party was interesting. Mademoiselle du Troëne was of the number of lookers-on; and the good mother, in making her own party, kept an eye upon her daughter, to read in her countenance what passed in her heart. Fortune favoured Belsors; Emily, displeased as she was with Verglan, had too good a heart not to suffer, on seeing him engaged in a serious loss. The young coxcomb could no longer contain himself; he grew angry, he doubled the game, and, before supper, he was on the point of playing upon honour. Ill-humour had seized him; he did his utmost to be merry; but the alteration of his countenance banished all joy. He perceived himself that they pitied him, and that they did not laugh at some

pleasantries he endeavoured to throw out: he was humbled, and indignation would have taken place, if they had not quitted the table. Belzors, whom neither his own good luck nor the chagrin of his rival had moved, was easy and modest, according to custom. They sat down again to play. Madam du Troëne, who had finished her own party, came to be president at this, extremely uneasy at the issue it might have, but desirous that it might make its impression on the soul of Emily. The success exceeded her expectation: Verglan lost more than he had to pay: his trembling hand and pale countenance expressed the trouble he wanted to conceal. Belzors, with an unbounded complaisance, gave him as many opportunities of revenging himself as he thought proper; and when, by doubling the game, he had suffered Verglan to get off for a reasonable sum; 'If you please,' said he, 'we will stop here: I think I may fairly win as much as I was resolved to lose.' So much moderation and discretion excited a murmur of applause in the company. Verglan alone appeared insensible to it, and said, on getting up, with an air of disdain, 'It was not worth the trouble of playing so long for.'

Emily did not sleep that night, so violently was her soul agitated with what she had just seen and heard. 'What a difference!' said she; 'and by what caprice is it that I must sigh at having been enlightened? Ought not the seduction to cease, as soon as we perceive that we are seduced? I admire one, and love the other. What is this misunderstanding between the heart and the reason, which makes us still hold dear that which we cease to esteem?'

In the morning she appeared, according to custom, at her mother's levée. 'You seem strangely altered,' said Madam du Troëne. 'Yes, madam, I am very much so.'—'What, have not you slept

well ?'—' Very little,' said she, with a sigh. ' You must endeavour, however, to look handsome; for I am going to take you this morning to the Thuilleries, where all Paris is to be assembled. I used to lament that the finest garden in the world was abandoned: I am very glad it is come into fashion again.'

Verglan failed not to repair there, and Madam du Troëne retained him about her. The view of this walk had the air of enchantment. A thousand beauties, in all the gaiety of dress, were seated round the basin, whose sides are decorated by sculpture. The superb walk which this basin crowns was filled with young nymphs, who by their charms and accomplishments attracted the desires after their steps. Verglan knew them all, and smiled upon them, following them with his eyes. ' This here,' said he, ' is Fatimé. Nothing is more tender and sensible; she lives like an angel with Cleon: he has given her twenty thousand crowns in six months; they love like two turtles. That there is the celebrated Corinna: her house is the temple of luxury; her suppers the most brilliant in Paris; she does the honours of them with a grace that enchants us. Do you see that fair beauty who looks so modest, and whose glances wander languishingly on every side? She has three lovers, each of whom flatters himself that he alone is the happy man. It is a pleasure to see her amidst her adorers, distributing slight favours to each, and persuading each in their turns that she jilts their rivals. She is a model of coquetry, and nobody deceives a set of lovers with so much address and sprightliness. She will go a great way, on my word, and I have told her so.'—' You are in her confidence then?' said Madam du Troëne. ' Oh, yes, they don't dissemble with me: they know me; they know very well that they cannot impose upon me.'—' And you, Belsors,' said Madam du Troëne to the sensible and virtuous young man,

who had joined them, 'are you initiated in the mysteries?'—'No, madam: I can believe that all that is very amusing; but the charm makes the danger.' Madam du Troëne observed that the modest women received with a cold and reserved air the smiling and familiar salute of Verglan, while they returned with an air of esteem and friendship the respectful salutation of Belzors. She rallied Verglan on this distinction, in order to make Emily perceive it. 'It is true,' said he, 'madam, that they behave rigidly to me in public; but *tête-à-tête*, they make me amends for it.'

On her return home with them, she received a visit from Eleonora, a young widow of uncommon beauty. Eleonora spoke of the misfortune she had sustained in losing a deserving husband; she spoke of it with so much sensibility, candour, and grace, that Madam du Troëne, Emily, and Belzors listened to her with tears in their eyes. 'To a young, handsome woman,' said Verglan in a gay tone, 'a husband is a trifling loss, and easy to be repaired.'—'Not to me, sir,' replied the tender and modest Eleonora: 'a husband who honoured a wife of my age with his esteem and his confidence, and whose delicate love never was tainted either by fears or jealousy, or the negligences of habitude, is not one of those whom we can easily replace.'—'He had, I take it for granted, a fine person?' said Verglan. 'No, sir; but his soul was beautiful.'—'A beautiful soul!' replied Verglan, with a disdainful air, 'a beautiful soul! He was young at least?'—'Not at all; he was of an age wherein we are affected when we have any occasion to be so.'—'But if he was neither young nor handsome, I don't see why you should afflict yourself. Confidence, esteem, handsome treatment, attend of course an amiable woman; nothing of that kind could have been wanting to you. Believe me, madam, the essential point is to suit yourself as to age and figure, to unite the Graces with the Loves; in one word, to

marry a handsome man, or to preserve your liberty.' —'Your advice is very gallant,' replied Eleonora, 'but unfortunately it is misplaced.'—'There is a pretty prude!' said Verglan, as soon as she was gone. 'Prudery, sir,' replied Madam du Troëne, 'is an exaggerated copy of prudence and reason; and I see nothing in Eleonora but what is plain and natural.'—'For my part,' said Belzors, 'I think her as respectable as she is handsome.'—'Respect her, sir, respect her,' resumed Verglan with vivacity; 'who hinders you? She is the only person can take it ill.'—'Do you know,' interrupted Madam du Troëne, 'who could console Eleonora? Such a man as Belzors: and if I were the confidante that he consulted on his choice, I would persuade him to think of her.'—'You do me great honour, madam,' said Belzors, colouring; 'but Eleonora deserves a heart that is disengaged, and unhappily mine is not so.' At these words he took his leave, quite confounded at the dismission which he thought he had received. 'For in short,' said he, 'to invite me herself to pay my addresses to Eleonora, is not that giving me notice to renounce Emily? Alas! how little my heart is known to her!' Verglan, who took it in the same sense, affected to pity his rival. He spoke of him as one of the honestest men in the world. 'It is pity he is so gloomy,' said he, with a tone of compassion: 'that is all they get by their virtue, they grow tiresome, and are dismissed.' Madam du Troëne, without explaining herself, assured him that she had not intended saying any thing disobliging to a man for whom she had a most particular esteem and regard. In the mean time Emily sat with downcast eyes, and her blushes betrayed the agitation of her soul. Verglan, not doubting but this confusion was an emotion of joy, retired in triumph, and the day following wrote her a billet conceived in these terms. 'You must have thought me very romantic, beautiful Emily, in

having so long spoke to you only by my eyes! not accuse me of an unjust diffidence: I have read your heart; and if I had only that to consult, I should be very sure of its answer. But you depend on a mother, and mothers have their caprices. Happily your mother loves you, and her affection has enlightened her choice. The dismission of Belzors apprizes me that she has determined; but your consent ought to precede hers: I wait it with the most tender impatience, and the most violent love.' Emily opened this billet without knowing whence it came: she was as much offended as surprised at it, and without hesitation communicated it to her mother. 'I take very kindly of you,' said Madam du Troëne, 'this mark of your friendship; but I owe you in my turn confidence for confidence. Belzors has writ to me; read his letter.' Emily obeyed, and read: 'Madam, I honour the virtue, I admire the beauty, I do justice to Eleonora; but has Heaven favoured only her? And after having adored in your image every thing that Heaven has made most affecting, do you think me in a condition to follow the counsel which you have given me? I will not say to you how cruel it is; my respect stifles my complaints. If I have not the name, I have at least the sentiments of your son, and that character cannot be effaced.'

Emily could not finish without the most lively emotion. Her mother pretended not to perceive it, and said to her, 'There now, child; *I* indeed must answer these two rivals, but *you* must dictate my answers.'—'I, madam!'—'Who else? Is it I whom they demand in marriage? Is it my heart that I am to consult?'—'Ah! madam, is not your will mine? Have not you the right to dispose of me?'—'You are very good, my dear; but as your own happiness is concerned, it is just that you should decide on it. These young men are both well born; their conditions and fortunes nearly the same: see which comes up nearest to the idea you

have formed of a good husband. Let us keep him, and dismiss the other.' Emily, struck, kissed her mother's hands, and bathed them with her tears. 'Complete your goodness,' said she to her, 'by enlightening me in my choice: the more important it is, the more need have I for your advice to determine it. The husband whom my mother shall choose for me shall be dear to me; my heart dares promise that.'—'No, my dear, there is no loving out of mere duty; and you know better than myself the man who is likely to make you happy. If you are not so, I will console you: I would readily share your sorrows, but I would not be the cause of them. Come, I take pen in hand, I am going to write; you need but to dictate.' Imagine the trouble, the confusion, the moving situation of Emily. Trembling by the side of this tender mother, one hand on her eyes and the other on her heart, she essayed in vain to obey her; her voice expired on her lips. 'Well,' said the good mother, 'to which of the two are we to return an answer? Make an end, or I shall grow impatient.'—'To Verglan,' said Emily, with a feeble and faltering voice. 'To Verglan, be it so; what shall I say to him?'

'It is impossible, sir, that a man so necessary to society as yourself should renounce it to live in the bosom of his family. My Emily has not qualities sufficient to indemnify you for the sacrifices which she would require. Continue to embellish the world; for it is for that you are made.'—'Is this all?'—'Yes, madam.'—'And to Belzors, what shall we say to him?' Emily continued to dictate with somewhat more confidence. 'To deem you worthy of a woman as virtuous as handsome was not, sir, to forbid you to make a choice which interests me as much as it does me honour; it was even to encourage you. Your modesty has reversed things, and you have been unjust both to yourself and to me. Come, and learn to judge better of

the intentions of a good mother. I dispose of the heart of my daughter, and I esteem none in the world more than yourself.'

'Come hither, my child, that I may embrace you,' cried Madam du Troëne; 'you fulfil the wishes of your mother, and you could not have said better, though you had consulted my heart.'

Belzors hastened to them, quite beside himself with joy. Never was marriage more applauded, more fortunate. Belzors' affection was divided between Emily and her mother, and it was a moot point among the world, which of the two he loved most.

THE

SHEPHERDESS OF THE ALPS.

In the mountains of Savoy, not far from the road from Briançon to Modena, is a solitary valley, the sight of which inspires travellers with a pleasing melancholy. Three little hills in form of an amphitheatre, on which are scattered, at a great distance from each other, some shepherds' huts, torrents that fall from the mountains, clumps of trees here and there, pastures always green, form the ornament of this rural place.

The Marchioness of Fonrose was returning from France to Italy with her husband. The axle-tree of their carriage broke; and as the day was on the decline, they were obliged to seek in this valley for some shelter to pass the night. As they advanced towards one of the huts, they saw a flock going that way, conducted by a shepherdess whose gait astonished them. They drew nearer, and heard a heavenly voice, whose plaintive and moving accents made the echoes groan.

'How the setting sun still glitters with a gentle light! It is thus,' said she, 'that at the end of a painful race, the exhausted soul departs to grow young again in the pure source of immortality. But alas, how distant is the period, and how long is life!' On saying these words, the shepherdess retired with her head inclined; but the negligence of her attitude seemed to give still more nobleness and majesty to her person and deportment.

Struck with what they saw, and still more with what they had just heard, the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose redoubled their pace, in order to overtake this shepherdess whom they admired.

But what was their surprise, when under the plainest head-dress, beneath the most humble garb, they saw all the graces, all the beauties united! 'Child,' said the marchioness to her, on seeing that she avoided them, 'fear nothing; we are travellers whom an accident obliges to seek shelter in these huts till the day: will you be so good as to be our guide?'—'I pity you, madam,' said the shepherdess to her, looking down and blushing: 'these huts are inhabited by poor wretches, and you will be very ill lodged.'—'You lodge there without doubt yourself,' replied the marchioness; 'and I can easily endure, for one night, the inconveniences which you suffer always.'—'I am formed for that,' said the shepherdess, with a modesty that charmed them. 'No, surely,' said the Marquis de Fonrose, who could no longer dissemble the emotion she had caused in him; 'no, you are not formed to suffer; and Fortune is very unjust! Is it possible, lovely damsel, that so many charms are buried in this desert, under that habit?'—'Fortune, sir,' replied Adelaïde (this was the name of the shepherdess), 'Fortune is not cruel, but when she takes from us that which she has given us. My condition has its pleasures for one who knows no other, and custom creates wants for you, which shepherds do not know.'—'That may be,' said the marquis, 'with respect to those whom Heaven has placed from their birth in this obscure condition; but you, astonishing damsel, you, whom I admire, you, who enchant me, you were never born what you now are; that air, that gait, that voice, that language, every thing betrays you. But two words which you have just now spoken proclaim a cultivated understanding, a noble soul. Proceed; teach us what misfortune can have reduced you to this strange abasement.'—'For a man in misfortune,' replied Adelaïde, 'there are a thousand ways to extricate himself; for a woman, you know, there is no other honest resource than servitude, and the

choice of masters. They do well, in my opinion, who prefer the good. You are now going to see mine; you will be charmed with the innocence of their lives, the candour, the simplicity, the probity of their manners.'

While she talked thus, they arrived at the hut. It was separated by a partition from the fold into which this *incognita* drove her sheep, telling them over with the most serious attention, and without deigning to take any farther notice of the travellers, who contemplated her. An old man and his wife, such as Philemon and Baucis are described to us, came forth to meet their guests with that village-honesty, which recalls the golden age to our minds. 'We have nothing to offer you,' said the good woman, 'but fresh straw for a bed, milk, fruit, and rye-bread for your food; but the little that Heaven gives us we will most heartily share with you.' The travellers, on entering the hut, were surprised at the air of regularity which every thing breathed there. The table was one single plank of walnut-tree highly polished: they saw themselves in the enamel of the earthen vessels designed for their milk. Every thing presented the image of cheerful poverty, and of the first wants of nature agreeably satisfied. 'It is our dear daughter,' said the good woman, 'who takes upon her the management of our house. In the morning, before her flock ramble far into the country, and while they begin to graze round the house on the grass covered with dew, she washes, cleans, and sets every thing in order with a dexterity that charms us.'—'What!' said the marchioness, 'is this shepherdess your daughter?'—'Ah, madam! would to Heaven she were!' cried the good old woman; 'it is my heart that calls her so, for I have a mother's love for her; but I am not so happy as to have borne her; we are not worthy to have given her birth.'—'Who is she, then? Whence comes she? and what misfortune has reduced her to such a

condition?'—'All that is unknown to us. It is now four years since she came in the habit of a female peasant to offer herself to keep our flocks; we would have taken her for nothing, so much had her good look and pleasing manner won upon our hearts. We doubted her being born a villager; but our questions afflicted her, and we thought it our duty to abstain from them. This respect has but augmented in proportion as we have become better acquainted with her soul; but the more we would humble ourselves to her, the more she humbles herself to us. Never had daughter more attention for her father and mother, nor officiousness more tender. She cannot obey us, because we are far from commanding her; but it seems as if she saw through us, and every thing that we can wish is done, before we perceive that she thinks of it. She is an angel come down among us to comfort our old age.'—'And what is she doing now in the fold?' demanded the marchioness. 'Giving the flock fresh litter; drawing the milk from the ewes and she-goats. This milk, pressed out by her hand, seems to become the more delicate for it. I who go and sell it in the town, cannot serve it fast enough. They think it delicious. The dear child employs herself, while she is watching the flock, in works of straw and osier, which are admired by all. Every thing becomes valuable beneath her fingers. You see, madam,' continued the good old woman, 'you see here, the image of an easy and quiet life: it is she that procures it to us. This heavenly daughter is never employed but to make us happy.'—'Is she happy herself?' demanded the Marquis de Fonrose. 'She endeavours to persuade us so,' replied the old man: 'but I have frequently observed to my wife, that at her return from the pasture she had her eyes bedewed with tears, and the most afflicted air in the world. The moment she sees us she affects to smile: but we see plainly that she has some grief that consumes

her. We dare not ask her what it is.'—'Ah, madam!' said the old woman, 'how I suffer for this child, when she persists in leading out her flocks to pasture in spite of rain and frost! many a time have I thrown myself on my knees, in order to prevail with her to let me go in her stead; but I never could prevail on her. She goes out at sun-rise, and returns in the evening benumbed with cold. 'Judge now,' says she to me, 'whether I would suffer you to quit your fire-side, and expose yourself at your age to the rigours of the season. I am scarce able to withstand it myself.' Nevertheless, she brings home under her arm the wood with which we warm ourselves; and when I complain of the fatigue she gives herself, 'Have done, have done, my good mother; it is by exercise that I keep myself from cold: labour is made for my age.' In short, madam, she is as good as she is handsome, and my husband and I never speak of her but with tears in our eyes.'—'And if she should be taken from you?' said the marchioness. 'We should lose,' interrupted the old man, 'all that we hold dearest in the world; but if she herself was to be the happier for it, we would die happy in that consolation.'—'Oh! ay,' replied the old woman, shedding tears, 'Heaven grant her a fortune worthy of her, if it be possible! it was my hope that that hand, so dear to me, would have closed my eyes, for I love her more than my life.' Her arrival broke off their discourse.

She appeared with a pail of milk in one hand, a basket of fruit in the other; and after saluting them with an ineffable grace, she directed her attention to the care of the family, as if nobody observed her. 'You give yourself a great deal of trouble, my dear child,' said the marchioness. 'I endeavour, madam,' replied she, 'to fulfil the intention of those I serve, who are desirous of entertaining you in the best manner they are able. You will have,' continued she, spreading over the table a

coarse, but very white cloth, 'you will have a frugal and rural repast: this bread is not the whitest in the world, but it tastes pretty well; the eggs are fresh, the milk is good, and the fruits, which I have just now gathered, are such as the season affords.' The diligence, the attention, the noble and becoming grace with which this wonderful shepherdess paid them all the duties of hospitality; the respect she showed for her master and mistress, whether she spoke to them, or whether she sought to read in their eyes what they wanted her to do; all these things filled the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose with astonishment and admiration. As soon as they were laid down on the bed of fresh straw, which the shepherdess had prepared for them herself, 'Our adventure has the air of a prodigy,' said they one to another: 'we must clear up this mystery; we must carry away this child along with us.'

At break of day, one of the men, who had been up all night mending their carriage, came to inform them that it was thoroughly repaired. Madam de Fonrose, before she set out, ordered the shepherdess to be called to her. 'Without wanting to pry,' said she, 'into the secret of your birth, and the cause of your misfortune; all that I see, all that I hear, interests me in your favour. I see that your spirit has raised you above ill fortune; and that you have suited your sentiments to your present condition: your charms and your virtues render it respectable, but yet it is unworthy of you. I have it in my power, amiable stranger, to procure you a happier lot; my husband's intentions agree entirely with mine. I have a considerable estate at Turin: I want a friend of my own sex, and I shall think I bear away from this place an invaluable treasure, if you will accompany me. Separate from the proposal, from the suit I now make you, all notion of servitude: I do not think you made for that condition: but though my prepossessions in your fa-

vour should deceive me, I had rather raise you above your birth than leave you beneath it. I repeat to you, it is a friend of my own sex that I want to attach to me. For the rest, be under no concern for the fate of these good people; there is nothing which I would not do to make them amends for your loss; at least they shall have wherewith to spend the remainder of their lives happily, according to their condition; and it is from your hand that they shall receive the benefits I intend them.' The old folks, who were present at this discourse, kissing the hands of the marchioness and throwing themselves at her feet, begged the young *incognita* to accept of these generous offers: they represented to her with tears, that they were on the brink of the grave; that she had no other consolation than to make them happy in their old age; and that at their death, when left to herself, their habitation would become a dreadful solitude. The shepherdess, embracing them, mingled her tears with theirs; she returned thanks to the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose for their goodness, with a sensibility that made her still more beautiful. 'I cannot,' said she, 'accept of your courtesies. Heaven has marked out my place, and its will is accomplished: but your goodness has made impressions on my soul which will never be effaced. The respectable name of Fonrose shall ever be present to my imagination. I have but one favour more to ask you,' said she, blushing, and looking down, 'that is to be so good as to bury this adventure in eternal silence, and to leave the world for ever ignorant of the lot of an unknown wretch, who wants to live and die in oblivion.' The Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose, moved with pity and grief, redoubled a thousand times their instances: she was immovable, and the old people, the travellers, and the shepherdess, separated with tears in their eyes.

During the journey the marquis and his lady were taken up with nothing but this adventure.

They thought they had been in a dream. Their imaginations being filled with this kind of romance, they arrive at Turin. It may easily be imagined that they did not keep silence, and this was an inexhaustible subject for reflections and conjectures. The young Fonrose, being present at these discourses, lost not one circumstance. He was at that age wherein the imagination is most lively, and the heart most susceptible; but he was one of those characters whose sensibility displays not itself outwardly, and who are so much the more violently agitated, when they are so at all, as the sentiment which affects them does not weaken itself by any sort of dissipation. All that Fonrose hears said of the charms, virtues, and misfortunes of the shepherdess of Savoy, kindles in his soul the most ardent desire of seeing her. He forms to himself an image of her, which is always present to him. He compares her to every thing that he sees, and every thing that he sees vanishes before her. But the more his impatience redoubles, the more care he takes to conceal it. Turin becomes odious to him. The valley which conceals from the world its brightest ornament attracts his whole soul. It is there that happiness waits him. But if his project is known, he foresees the greatest obstacles: they will never consent to the journey he meditates: it is the folly of a young man, the consequences of which they will be apprehensive of; the shepherdess herself, affrighted at his pursuits, will not fail to withdraw herself from them; he loses her, if he should be known. After all these reflections, which employed his thoughts for three months, he takes a resolution to quit every thing for her sake; to go, under the habit of a shepherd, to seek her in her solitude, and to die there, or draw her out of it.

He disappears; they see him no more. His parents become alarmed at his absence: their fear increases every day: their expectations disappointed throw the whole family into affliction: the fruit-

lessness of their inquiries completes their despair; a duel, an assassination, every thing that is most unfortunate, presents itself to their imagination; and these unhappy parents ended their researches by lamenting the death of their son, their only hope. While his family are in mourning, Fonrose, under the habit of a shepherd, presents himself to the inhabitants of the hamlets adjoining to the valley, which they had but too well described to him. His ambition is accomplished: they trust him with the care of their flocks.

The first days after his arrival, he left them to wander at random, solely attentive to discover the places to which the shepherdess led hers.

'Let us manage,' said he, 'the timidity of this solitary fair one: if she is unfortunate, her heart has need of consolation: if it be nothing but a desire to banish herself from the world, and the pleasure of a tranquil and innocent life, that retains her here, she will feel some dull moments, and wish for company to amuse or console her. If I succeed so far as to render that agreeable to her, she will soon find it necessary: then I shall take counsel from the situation of her soul. After all, we are here alone, as it were, in the world, and we shall be every thing to each other. From confidence to friendship the passage is not long, and from friendship to love, at our age, the road is still easier.' And what was Fonrose's age when he reasoned thus? Fonrose was eighteen; but three months reflection on the same object unfolds a number of ideas! While he was thus giving himself up to his imagination, with his eyes wandering over the country, he hears at a distance that voice, the charms of which had been so often extolled to him. The emotion it excited in him was as lively as if it had been unexpected. 'It is here,' said the shepherdess, in her plaintive strains, 'it is here that my heart enjoys the only happiness that remains to it. My grief has a luxury in it for my soul; I prefer its

bitterness to the deceitful sweets of joy.' These accents rent the sensible heart of Fonrose. 'What,' said he, 'can be the cause of the chagrin that consumes her? How pleasing would it be to console her!' A hope still more pleasing presumed, not without difficulty, to flatter his desires. He feared to alarm the shepherdess if he resigned himself imprudently to his impatience of seeing her near, and for the first time it was sufficient to have heard her. The next day he went out again to lead his sheep to pasture; and after observing the route which she had taken, he placed himself at the foot of a rock, which the day before repeated to him the sounds of that touching voice. I forgot to mention that Fonrose, to the handsomest figure, had joined those talents which the young nobility of Italy do not neglect. He played on the hautboy like Besuzzi, of whom he had taken his lessons, and who formed at that time the delight of Europe. Adelaïde, buried in her own afflicting ideas, had not yet made her voice heard, and the echoes kept silence. All on a sudden this silence was interrupted by the plaintive sounds of Fonrose's hautboy. These unknown sounds excited in the soul of Adelaïde a surprise mingled with anxiety. The keepers of the flocks that wandered on the hills had never caused her to hear aught before but the sounds of rustic pipes. Immovable and attentive, she seeks with her eyes who it was that could form such harmonious sounds. She perceives, at a distance, a young shepherd seated in the cavity of a rock, at the foot of which he fed his flock; she draws near, to hear him the better. 'See,' said she, 'what the mere instinct of nature can do! The ear teaches this shepherd all the refinements of the art. Can any one breathe purer sounds? What delicacy in his inflexions! what variety in his gradations! Who can say after this, that taste is not a gift of nature?' Ever since Adelaïde had dwelled in this solitude, this was the first time that her grief,

suspended by an agreeable distraction, had delivered up her soul to the sweet emotion of pleasure. Fonrose, who saw her approach, and seat herself at the foot of a willow to hear him, pretended not to perceive her. He seized, without seeming to affect it, the moment of her retreat, and managed the course of his own flock in such a manner as to meet her on the declivity of a hill, where the roads crossed. He cast only one look on her, and continued his route, as if taken up with nothing but the care of his flock. But what beauties had that one look ran over! What eyes! what a divine mouth! How much more ravishing still would those features be, which are so noble and touching in their languor, if love re-animated them! He saw plainly that grief alone had withered in their spring the roses on her lovely cheeks; but of so many charms, that which had moved him most was the noble elegance of her person and her gait; in the ease of her motions he thought he saw a young cedar, whose straight and flexible trunk yields gently to the zephyrs. This image, which love had just engraven in flaming characters on his memory, took up all his thoughts. 'How feebly,' said he, 'have they painted to me this beauty unknown to the world, whose adoration she merits! And it is a desert that she inhabits! and it is thatch that covers her! She who ought to see kings at her feet employs herself in tending an humble flock! Beneath what garments has she presented herself to my view! She adorns every thing, and nothing disfigures her. Yet what a life for a frame so delicate! Coarse food, a savage climate, a bed of straw. Great gods! And for whom are the roses made? Yes, I will draw her out of this state, so much too hard and too unworthy of her.' Sleep interrupted his reflections, but effaced not her image. Adelaïde, on her side, sensibly struck with the youth, the beauty of Fonrose, ceased not to admire the caprices of fortune. 'Where is nature going,' said she, 'to re-assemble together so many

talents and so many graces! But, alas! those gifts, which to him are here but useless, would be perhaps his misfortune in a more elevated state. What evils does not beauty create in the world! Unhappy as I am! is it for me to set any value on it?' This melancholy reflection began to poison in her soul the pleasure she had tasted; she reproached herself for having been sensible of it, and resolved to deny it herself for the future. The next day Fonrose thought he perceived that she avoided his approach: he fell into a profound melancholy. 'Could she suspect my disguise?' said he. 'Should I have betrayed it myself?' This uneasiness possessed him all the live long-day, and his hautboy was neglected. Adelaïde was not so far but she could easily have heard it; and his silence astonished her. She began to sing herself. 'It seems,' said the song, 'that every thing around me partakes of my heaviness: the birds send forth none but sorrowful notes, echo replies to me in complaints, the zephyrs moan amidst these leaves, the sound of the brooks imitates my sighs, one might say that they flowed with tears.' Fonrose, softened by these strains, could not help replying to them. Never was concert more moving than that of his hautboy with Adelaïde's voice. 'O heaven,' said she, 'it is enchantment! I dare not believe my ears: it is not a shepherd, it is a god whom I have heard. Can the natural sense of harmony inspire such concord of sounds?' While she was speaking thus, a rural or rather a celestial melody made the valley resound. Adelaïde thought she saw those prodigies realising which Poetry attributes to her sprightly sister Music. Astonished, confounded, she knew not whether she ought to take herself away, or resign herself up to this enchantment. But she perceived the shepherd, whom she had just heard, re-assembling his flock in order to regain his hut. 'He knows not,' says she, 'the delight he diffuses around him; his undisguised soul is not in the least vain of it: he

waits not even for the praises I owe him. Such is the power of music: it is the only talent that places its happiness in itself; all the others require witnesses. This gift of heaven was granted to man in his innocence: it is the purest of all pleasures. Alas! it is the only one I still relish; and I consider this shepherd as a new echo who is come to answer to my grief.'

The following days Fonrose affected to keep at a distance in his turn: Adelaïde was afflicted at it. 'Chance,' said she, 'seemed to have procured me this feeble consolation; I gave myself up to it too easily; and to punish me, she has deprived me of it.' At last, one day when they happened to meet on the declivity of the hill, 'Shepherd,' said she to him, 'are you leading your flocks far off?' These first words of Adelaïde caused an emotion in Fonrose, which almost deprived him of the use of his voice. 'I do not know,' said he, hesitating; 'it is not I who lead my flock, but my flock that leads me; these places are better known to it than to me: I leave to it the choice of the best pastures.'—'Whence are you, then?' said the shepherdess to him. 'I was born beyond the Alps,' replied Fonrose. 'Were you born among shepherds?' continued she. 'As I am a shepherd,' said he, looking down, 'I must have been born to be one.'—'I doubt it,' replied Adelaïde, viewing him with attention. 'Your talents, your language, your very air, all tell me, that fate had placed you in a better situation.'—'You are very obliging,' said Fonrose; 'but ought you, of all persons, to believe that nature refuses every thing to shepherds? Were you born to be a queen?' Adelaïde blushed at this answer; and changing the subject, 'The other day,' said she, 'by the sound of a hautboy you accompanied my songs with an art that would be a prodigy in a simple shepherd.'—'It is your voice that is so,' replied Fonrose, 'in a simple shepherdess.'—'But has nobody instructed you?'—'I have, like your-

self, no other guides than my heart and my ear. You sung, I was melted; what my heart feels, my hautboy expresses; I breathe my soul into it. This is the whole of my secret; nothing in the world is easier.'—'That is incredible,' said Adelaïde. 'I said the very same on hearing you,' replied Fonrose; 'but I was forced to believe it. What will you say? Nature and love sometimes take a delight in assembling their most precious gifts in persons of the most humble fortune, to show that there is no condition which they cannot ennoble.' During this discourse, they advanced towards the valley; and Fonrose, whom a ray of hope now animated, began to make the air resound with those sprightly notes which pleasure inspires. 'Ah! prithee, now,' said Adelaïde, 'spare my soul the troublesome image of a sentiment which she cannot relish. This solitude is consecrated to grief; her echoes are not used to repeat the accents of a profane joy: here every thing groans in concert with me.'—'I also have cause to complain,' replied the young man; and these words, pronounced with a sigh, were followed by a long silence. 'You have cause to complain!' replied Adelaïde; 'is it of mankind? is it of fortune?'—'No matter,' said he; 'but I am not happy; ask me no more.'—'Hear me,' said Adelaïde: 'Heaven gives us to each other as a consolation in our troubles; mine are like an overwhelming load, which weighs down my heart. Whoever you may be, if you know misfortune, you ought to be compassionate, and I believe you worthy of my confidence; but promise me that it shall be mutual.'—'Alas!' said Fonrose, 'my misfortunes are such, that I shall perhaps be condemned never to reveal them.' This mystery but redoubled the curiosity of Adelaïde. 'Repair to-morrow,' said she to him, 'to the foot of that hill, beneath that old tufted oak where you have heard me moan. There I will teach you things that will excite your pity.' Fonrose passed the night in the

utmost emotion. His fate depended on what he was going to hear. A thousand alarming ideas agitated him by turns. He dreaded, above all, being driven to despair by the communication of an unsuccessful and faithful love. 'If she is in love,' said he, 'I am undone.'

He repairs to the appointed place. He sees Adelaïde arrive. The day was overcast with clouds, and nature, mourning, seemed to forebode the sadness of their conversation. As soon as they were seated at the foot of the oak, Adelaïde spoke thus: 'You see these stones which the grass begins to cover; they are the tomb of the most tender, the most virtuous of men, whom my love and my imprudence have cost his life. I am a French woman, of a family of distinction, and, to my misfortune, too rich. The Count d'Orestan conceived the tenderest passion for me! I was sensible to it, sensible to excess. My parents opposed the inclination of our hearts, and my frantic passion made me consent to a marriage sacred to virtuous souls, but disallowed by the laws. Italy was at that time the theatre of war. My husband went thither to join the corps which he was to command: I followed him as far as Briançon: my foolish tenderness retained him there two days, in spite of himself: for he, a young man, full of honour, prolonged his stay there with the greatest reluctance. He sacrificed his duty to me: but what would not I have sacrificed to him? In a word, I required it of him; and he could not withstand my tears. He took leave with a foreboding which alarmed me: I accompanied him as far as this valley, where I received his adieus; and in order to wait to hear from him, I returned to Briançon. A few days after, a report was spread of a battle. I doubted whether d'Orestan had got thither; I wished it for his honour; I dreaded it for my love; when I received a letter from him, which I thought very consoling! 'I shall be such

a day, at such an hour,' said he, 'in the valley, and under the oak where we parted: I shall repair there alone; I conjure you to go there, and expect me likewise alone; I live yet but for you.' How great was my mistake! I perceived in this billet nothing more than an impatience to see me again, and this impatience made me happy. I repaired then to this very oak. D'Orestan arrives; and, after the tenderest reception, 'You would have it so, my dear Adelaïde,' said he; 'I have failed in my duty at the most important moment of my life. What I feared is come to pass. A battle has happened; my regiment charged; it performed prodigies of valour, and I was not there. I am dishonoured, lost without resource. I reproach not you with my misfortune, but I have now but one sacrifice more to make you, and my heart is come to accomplish it.' At this discourse, pale, trembling, and scarce breathing, I took my husband into my arms. I felt my blood congeal in my veins, my knees bent under me, and I fell down senseless. He availed himself of my fainting to tear himself from my bosom, and in a little time I was recalled to life by the report of a shot, which killed him. I will not describe to you the situation I was in; it is inexpressible; and the tears which you now see flowing, the sighs that stifle my voice, are but a feeble image of it. After passing a whole night beside his bloody corpse, in a grief that stupefied me, my first care was to bury along with him my shame: my hands dug out his grave. I seek not to move you; but the moment in which the earth was to separate me from the sorrowful remains of my husband, was a thousand times more dreadful to me than that can be which is to separate my body from my soul. Spent with grief, and deprived of nourishment, my enfeebled hands took up two whole days in hollowing out this tomb with inconceivable labour. When my strength forsook me, I reposed myself on the

livid and cold bosom of my husband. In short, I paid him the rites of sepulture, and my heart promised him to wait in these parts till death reunites us. In the mean time, cruel hunger began to devour my exhausted entrails. I thought it criminal to refuse nature the supports of a life more grievous than death. I changed my garments for the plain habit of a shepherdess, and I embraced that condition as my only refuge. From that time my only consolation has been to come here, and weep over this grave, which shall be my own. You see,' continued she, 'with what sincerity I open my soul to you. With you I may henceforth weep at liberty; it is a consolation I had need of; but I expect the same confidence from you. Do not think that you have deceived me. I see clearly, that the state of a shepherd is as foreign, and newer to you than to me. You are young, perhaps sensible; and, if I may believe my conjectures, our misfortunes have the same source, and you have loved as well as I. We shall only feel the more for one another. I consider you as a friend, whom Heaven, touched by my misfortunes, deigns to send me in my solitude. Do you also consider me as a friend, capable of giving you, if not salutary counsel, at least a consolatory example.'

'You pierce my very soul,' said Fonrose, overcome with what he had just heard; 'and whatever sensibility you may attribute to me, you are very far from conceiving the impression that the recital of your misfortunes has made on me. Alas! why cannot I return it with that confidence which you testify towards me, and of which you are so worthy? But I warned you of it; I foresaw it. Such is the nature of my sorrows, that an eternal silence must shut them up in the bottom of my heart. You are very unhappy,' added he, with a profound sigh: 'I am still more unhappy: this is all I can tell you. Be not offended at my silence;

it is terrible to me to be condemned to it. The constant companion of all your steps, I will soften your labours; I will partake of all your griefs: I will see you weep over this grave, I will mingle my tears with yours. You shall not repent having deposited your woes in a heart, alas! but too sensible.'—'I repent me of it from this moment,' said she, with confusion; and both with downcast eyes, retired in silence from each other. Adelaïde, on quitting Fonrose, thought she saw in his countenance the impression of a profound grief. 'I have revived,' said she, 'the sense of his sorrows; and what must be their horror, when he thinks himself still more wretched than I!'

From that day more sighing and more conversation followed between Fonrose and Adelaïde. They neither sought nor avoided one another: looks of consternation formed almost their only language; if he found her weeping over the grave of her husband, his heart was seized with pity, jealousy, and grief; he contemplated her in silence, and answered her sighs with deep groans.

Two months had passed away in this painful situation, and Adelaïde saw Fonrose's youth wither as a flower. The sorrow which consumed him, afflicted her so much the more deeply, as the cause of it was unknown to her. She had not the most distant suspicion that she was the object of it. However, as it is natural, when two sentiments divide a soul, for one to weaken the other, Adelaïde's regret on account of the death of D'Orestan became less lively every day, in proportion as she delivered herself up to the pity with which Fonrose inspired her. She was very sure that this pity had nothing but what was innocent in it; it did not even come into her head to defend herself from it; and the object of this generous sentiment being continually present to her view, awakened it every instant. The languor into which this young man was fallen became such, that she thought it

her duty not to leave him any longer to himself. 'You are dying,' said she to him; 'and you add to my griefs that of seeing you consumed with sorrow under my eye, without being able to apply any remedy. If the recital of the imprudences of my youth has not inspired you with a contempt for me; if the purest and tenderest friendship be dear to you; in short, if you would not render me more unhappy than I was before I knew you, confide to me the cause of your griefs: you have no person in the world but myself to assist you in supporting them: your secret, though it were more important than mine, fear not that I shall divulge. The death of my husband has placed a gulf betwixt the world and me; and the confidence which I require will soon be buried in this grave, to which grief is with slow steps conducting me.'—'I hope to go before you,' said Fonrose, bursting into tears. 'Suffer me to finish my deplorable life without leaving you afterwards the reproach of having shortened its course.'—'O heavens, what do I hear!' cried she, with distraction. 'What! can I have contributed to the evils which overwhelm you? Go on, you pierce my soul. What have I done? what have I said? Alas, I tremble! Good Heaven! hast thou sent me into the world only to create wretches? Speak, nay speak! you must no longer conceal who you are; you have said too much to dissemble any longer.'—'Well then, I am ... I am Fonrose, the son of those travellers whom you filled with admiration and respect. All that they related of your virtues and your charms inspired me with the fatal design of coming to see you in this disguise. I have left my family in the deepest sorrow, thinking they have lost me, and lamenting my death. I have seen you, I know what attaches you to this place, I know that the only hope that is left me is to die here adoring you. Give me no useless counsel or unjust reproaches. My resolution is as firm, as immoveable as your own. If,

in betraying my secret, you disturb the last moments of a life almost at an end, you will to no purpose injure me, who would never offend you.'

Adelaide, confounded, endeavoured to calm the despair into which this young man was plunged. 'Let me,' said she, 'do to his parents the service of restoring him to life; let me save their only hope: Heaven presents me with this opportunity of acknowledging their favours.' Thus, far from making him furious by a misplaced rigour, all the tenderness of pity, and consolation of friendship, was put in practice in order to soothe him.

'Heavenly angel,' cried Fonrose, 'I see all the reluctance that you feel to make any one unhappy: your heart is with him who reposes in this grave; I see that nothing can detach you from him, I see how ingenious your virtue is to conceal your woe from me; I perceive it in all its extent; I am overwhelmed by it, but I pardon you: it is your duty never to love me; it is mine ever to adore you.'

Impatient of executing the design which she had conceived, Adelaide arrives at her hut. 'Father,' said she to her old master, 'do you think you have strength to travel to Turin? I have need of somebody whom I can trust, to give the Marquis and Marchioness of Fonrose the most interesting intelligence.' The old man replied, that his zeal to serve them inspired him with courage. 'Go,' resumed Adelaide; 'you will find them bewailing the death of their only son: tell them that he is living, and in these parts, and that I will restore him to them; but that there is an indispensable necessity for their coming here themselves to fetch him.'

He sets out, arrives at Turin, sends in his address as the old man of the valley of Savoy. 'Ah!' cried Madam de Fonrose, 'some misfortune perhaps has happened to our shepherdess.'—'Let him come in,' added the marquis; 'he will tell us

perhaps that she consents to live with us.'—'After the loss of my son,' said the marchioness, 'it is the only comfort I can taste in this world.'—The old man is introduced. He throws himself at their feet: they raise him. 'You are lamenting the death of your son,' said he; 'I come to tell you that he lives: our dear child has discovered him in the valley: she sends me to inform you of it: but yourselves only, she says, can bring him back.' As he spoke this, surprise and joy deprived the Marchioness of Fonrose of her senses: the marquis, distracted and amazed, calls out for help for his lady, recalls her to life, embraces the old man, publishes to the whole house that their son is restored to them. The marchioness resuming her spirits, 'What shall we do?' said she, taking the old man by the hands, and pressing them with tenderness, 'what shall we do in gratitude for this benefit, which restores life to us?'

Every thing is ordered for their departure. They set out with the good man: they travel night and day, and repair to the valley where their only good awaits them. The shepherdess was out at pasture: the old woman conducts them to her; they approach. How great is their surprise! their son, that well-beloved son, is by her side in the habit of a simple shepherd. Their hearts sooner than their eyes acknowledge him. 'Ah! cruel child,' cried his mother, throwing herself into his arms, 'what sorrow have you occasioned us! why withdraw yourself from our tenderness? and what is it you come here for?'—'To adore,' said he, 'what you yourself admired.'—'Pardon me, madam,' said Adelaide, while Fonrose embraced his father's knees, who raised him with kindness; 'pardon me for having left you so long in grief: if I had known it sooner, you should have been sooner consoled.' After the first emotions of nature, Fonrose relapsed into the deepest affliction. 'Let us go,' said the marquis, 'let us

go rest ourselves in the hut, and forget all the pain that this young madman has occasioned us.'—'Yes, sir, I have been mad,' said Fonrose to his father, who led him by the hand; 'nothing but the loss of my reason could have suspended in my heart the emotions of nature, so as to make me forget the most sacred duties; in short, to detach myself from every thing that I held dearest in the world; but this madness you gave birth to, and I am but too severely punished for it. I love without hope the most accomplished person in the world: you see nothing, you know nothing of this incomparable woman: she is honesty, sensibility, virtue itself; I love her even to idolatry; I cannot be happy without her, and I know that she cannot be mine.'—'Has she confided to you,' said the marquis, 'the secret of her birth?'—'I have learned enough of it,' said Fonrose, 'to assure you, that it is in no respect beneath my own; she has even renounced a considerable fortune to bury herself in this desert.'—'And do you know what has induced her to it?'—'Yes, sir; but it is a secret which she alone can reveal to you.'—'She is married, perhaps?'—'She is a widow; but her heart is not the more disengaged: her ties are but too strong.'—'Daughter,' said the marquis, on entering the hut, 'you see that you turn the heads of the whole family of Fonrose. The extraordinary passion of this young man cannot be justified but by such a prodigy as you are. All my wife's wishes are confined to having you for a companion and a friend: this child here will not live unless he obtains you for his wife; I desire no less to have you for my daughter: see how many persons you will make unhappy by a refusal.'—'Ah! sir,' said she, 'your goodness confounds me: but hear and judge for me.' Then Adelaïde, in the presence of the old man and his wife, made a recital of her deplorable adventure. She added the name of her family, which was not unknown to the Marquis de Fon-

rose, and ended by calling on himself to witness the inviolable fidelity she owed her spouse. At these words, consternation spread itself over every countenance. Young Fonrose, choked with sobs, threw himself into a corner of the hut, in order to give them free scope. The father, moved at the sight, flew to the assistance of his son. 'See,' said he, 'my dear Adelaïde, to what a condition you have redueed him.' Madam de Fonrose, who was near Adelaïde, pressed her in her arms, bathing her at the same time with her tears. 'Alas! why, my daughter,' said she, 'why will you a second time make us mourn the death of our dear child?' The old man and his wife, their eyes filled with tears, and fixed upon Adelaïde, waited her speaking. 'Heaven is my witness,' said Adelaïde, rising, 'that I would lay down my life, in gratitude for such goodness. It would heighten my misfortunes to have occasion to reproach myself with yours: but I am willing that Fonrose himself should be my judge: suffer me, if you please, to speak to him for a moment.' Then retiring with him alone, 'Fonrose,' said she, 'you know what sacred ties retain me in this place. If I could cease to love and lament a husband who loved me but too well, I should be the most despicable of women. Esteem, friendship, gratitude, are the sentiments I owe you; but none of these can cancel love: the more you have conceived for me, the more you should expect from me: it is the impossibility of fulfilling that duty, that hinders my imposing it on myself. At the same time, I see you in a situation that would move the least sensible heart; it is shocking to me to be the cause, it would be still more shocking to me to hear your parents accuse me with having been your destruction. I will forget myself then for the present, and leave you, as far as in me lies, to be the arbiter of our destiny. It is for you to choose that of the two situations which appears to you least painful; either to renounce me, to subdue

yourself, and forget me, or to possess a woman, whose heart being full of another object, can only grant you sentiments too feeble to satisfy the wishes of a lover.'—'That is enough,' said Fonrose; 'and, in a soul like yours, friendship should take place of love. I shall be jealous, without doubt, of the tears which you shall bestow to the memory of another husband; but the cause of that jealousy, in rendering you more respectable, will render you also more dear in my eyes.'

'She is mine!' said he, coming and throwing himself into the arms of his parents; 'it is to her respect for you, to your goodness, that I owe her, and it is owing you a second life.' From that moment their arms were chains from which Adelaide could not disengage herself.

Did she yield only to pity, to gratitude? I would fain believe it, in order to admire her the more: Adelaide believed so herself. However it be, before she set out, she would revisit the tomb, which she quitted but with regret. 'O my dear d'Orestan!' said she, 'if from the womb of the dead thou canst read the bottom of my soul, thy shade has no cause to murmur at the sacrifice I make: I owe it to the generous sentiments of this virtuous family; but my heart remains thine for ever. I go to endeavour to make them happy, without any hope of being myself so! It was not without some sort of violence they forced her from the place; but she insisted that they should erect a monument there to the memory of her husband; and that the hut of her old master and mistress, who followed her to Turin, should be converted into a country-house, as plain as it was solitary, where she proposed to come sometimes to mourn the errors and misfortunes of her youth. Time, the assiduities of Fonrose, the fruits of her second marriage, have since opened her soul to the impressions of a new affection: and they cite her as an example of a woman remarkable, and respectable, even in her infidelity.

THE HAPPY DIVORCE.

UNEASINESS and inconstancy are, in the greatest part of mankind, nothing more than the consequence of false calculation. Too strong a prepossession in favour of the happiness we desire, makes us experience, as soon as we possess it, that uneasiness and disgust which suffer us to relish nothing. The imagination deceived, and the heart dissatisfied, wander to new objects, the prospect of which dazzles in its turn, and the approach disabuses us. Thus from illusion to illusion, life is passed away in changing the chimera: this is the malady of lively and delicate souls; nature has nothing sufficiently perfect for them: whence it proceeds that it is thought such a mighty matter to fix the taste of a pretty woman.

Lucilia, in the convent, had painted to herself the charms of love, and the delights of marriage, with the colouring of an imagination of a girl of fifteen, whose flower nothing had yet tarnished.

She had seen the world only in those ingenious fictions which are the romance of human nature. It costs nothing to an eloquent man to give love and marriage all the charms that he conceives. Lucilia, according to these pictures, saw lovers and husbands only as they are to be met with in fables; always tender and full of love, saying nothing but fine things, taken up solely with the care of pleasing, new homages, or pleasures eternally varied.

Such was the prepossession of Lucilia, when they came to draw her out of the convent to marry the Marquis de Lisere. His engaging and noble figure inspired her with a favourable opinion of him, and his first addresses succeeded in determining the irresolution of her soul. She saw not yet in the marquis the ardour of a passionate love; but she

thought modestly enough of herself not to pretend to set him on fire at first sight. This liking, tranquil at its birth, would make a rapid progress; he must have time. However, the marriage was concluded upon, and solemnised, before the inclination of the marquis was grown a violent passion.

Nothing was more steady or solid than the temper of the Marquis de Lisere. In marrying a young woman, he proposed to himself, in order to make her happy, to begin by being her friend, persuaded that an honest man does whatever he pleases with a well disposed woman, when he has gained her confidence; and that a husband who makes himself dreaded, invites his wife to deceive him, and authorises her to hate him.

In order to follow the plan which he had traced out to himself, it was necessary not to be a too passionate lover: passion knows no rule. He had considered well before his engagement, on the kind of liking with which Lucilia inspired him, resolved never to marry a woman whom he should love to distraction. Lucilia found in her husband only that lively and tender friendship, that attentive and constant complaisance, that soft and pure pleasure, that love, in short, which has neither its hot nor its cold fits. At first, she flattered herself that intoxication, enchantment, transports, would have their turn; but the soul of Lisere was unalterable.

'This is very extraordinary,' said she; 'I am young, handsome, and my husband don't love me! I am his, and he thinks it enough to possess me with coldness. But then why suffer him to be cold? Can he have any violent longings for what is in his power without reserve or trouble? He would become passionately fond of me if he were jealous. How unjust are men! We must torment them in order to please them. Be tender, faithful, fond, they neglect, they disdain you. An even course of happiness makes them dull. Caprice, coquetry, inconstancy, rouse and enliven them: they set

no value on pleasure, but in proportion to the trouble it gives them. Lisere, less sure of being beloved, will become a thousand times fonder. That is easy; let me be in the fashion. Every thing around me presents me with enough to make him uneasy, if he is capable of jealousy.'

After this fine project, Lucilia gave herself up to dissipation, to coquetry; she assumed a mystery in all her proceedings; she made parties without the marquis. 'Did I not foresee it,' said he to himself, 'that I had a wife like other women? Six months after marriage she begins to be tired of it. I should be a happy man, now, if I were passionately fond of my wife! Happily my liking and esteem for her leave me full enjoyment of my reason: I must make use of it; dissemble, subdue myself, and employ nothing but gentleness and soothing measures to keep her in order. They do not always succeed; but reproaches, complaints, restraint, and violence, succeed still less.' The moderation, complaisance, and tranquillity of the marquis, put Lucilia out of all patience. 'Alas!' said she, 'do what I will, it is all to no purpose; this man will never love me: he is one of those cold souls whom nothing moves, nothing engages, and I am condemned to pass my life with a stone that knows neither how to love or hate! O, the delight of sensible souls, the charms of impassioned hearts! Love, who raisest us to heaven on thy fiery pinions, where are those flaming darts with which thou woundest happy lovers? where is that intoxication into which thou plungest them? where are those ravishing transports with which they mutually inspire each other? Where are they?' continued she. 'In free and independent love, in the disposal of two hearts which give a loose to themselves. And why should the marquis be fond? What sacrifice have I made him? By what marks of courage, by what heroic devotion of myself, have I moved the sensibility of his soul? Where is the merit of having obeyed, of having

accepted for a husband an amiable and rich young man, chosen without my consent? Is it for love to interfere in a marriage of convenience? But is this, then, the lot of a woman of sixteen, to whom, without vanity, nature has given wherewith to please, and still more wherewith to love? For after all, I cannot conceal from myself the graces of my figure, nor the sensibility of my heart. At sixteen to languish without hope in cold indifference, and to see at least a score of years waste away without pleasure, which might have been delicious! I say a score at least; and it is not desiring to tire the world, to be content to renounce it before forty years of age. Cruel family! was it for you that I took a husband? You chose me an honest man; a rare present you made me! To be dull with an honest man, and to be dull all one's life! very hard, indeed!'

This discontent soon degenerated into peevishness, and Lisere thought he perceived at last that she had taken an aversion to him. His friends displeased her, their company became troublesome to her, she received them with a coolness sufficient to keep them at a distance. The marquis could no longer dissemble. 'Madam,' said he to Lucilia, 'the end of marriage is to make people happy; we are not so, and it is in vain to pique ourselves on a constancy which restrains us. Our fortune puts us in a condition of doing without each other, and of resuming that liberty of which we imprudently make a mutual sacrifice. Live by yourself; I will live by myself. I ask towards me only that decency and regard which you owe to yourself.'—'With all my heart, sir,' replied Lucilia, with the coldness of disgust; and from that moment every thing was settled; that madam might have her equipage, her table, her domestics, in one word, a separate maintenance.

Lucilia's suppers soon became ranked among the most brilliant in Paris. Her company was sought

by all the handsome women and men of gallantry. But there was a necessity for Lucilia's having some particular, and he who should engage her first, it was observed, had the only hard task! In the mean time, she enjoyed the homages of a brilliant set; and her heart, yet irresolute, seemed to suspend her choice only to render it more flattering. She thought at last she saw the person who would determine it. At the approach of the Count de Blamzé all other pretenders lowered their tone. He was, of the whole court, the most to be dreaded by a young woman. It was agreed that there was no resisting him, and so they spared themselves the trouble. He was beautiful as the day; presented himself with grace; spoke little, but extremely well; and if he said common things, he rendered them interesting by the most pleasing sound of voice, and the most beautiful look in the world. They could not say that Blamzé was a fop, his foppery had so much dignity. A modest haughtiness formed his character; he decided with the gentlest air in the world, and the most laconic tone: he listened to contradictions with good humour; replied to them only with a smile; and if they pressed him to explain himself, he smiled still, and kept silence, or repeated what he had said before. Never did he combat the opinion of another, never did he take any trouble to give a reason for his own: it was the most attentive politeness, and the most decisive presumption, that had ever yet been united in a young man of quality.

This assurance had something commanding in it, which rendered him the oracle of taste, and the legislator of fashion. They were never sure of being right in the choice of a suit, or the colour of a carriage, till Blamzé had approved it by a glance. *It is excellent, it is handsome*, were the precious words from his mouth; and his silence a dead warrant. The despotism of his opinion extended even over beauty, talents, wit, and graces. In a circle

of women, she whom he had honoured with a particular attention was that instant in vogue.

Blamzé's reputation had gone before him to Lucilia's; but the deference which even his rivals paid him, redoubled the esteem she had conceived for him. She was dazzled with his beauty, and still more surprised at his modesty. He presented himself with the most respectful air, seated himself in the lowest place, but all looks were soon directed towards him. His dress was the model of taste: all the young people who surrounded him studied him with a scrupulous attention. His laces, his embroidery, his manner of dressing his head, were all examined: they wrote down the names of his tradespeople and workmen. 'It is strange,' said they, 'we see these designs, these colours nowhere else.' Blamzé confessed modestly that it cost him very little trouble. 'Industry,' said he, 'is at its highest perfection; you need but to enlighten and direct it.' He took a pinch of snuff as he said these words, and his box excited new curiosity; it was, however, the work of a young artist whom Blamzé had drawn from his obscurity. They asked him the price of every thing; he replied with a smile that he knew the price of none of them; and the women whispered in each other's ear the name of the female who took these matters under her care.

'I am ashamed, madam,' said Blamzé to Lucilia, 'that these trifles should engage the attention, which ought to centre in a more interesting object. Pardon me if I listen to the frivolous questions of these young men: never did complaisance cost me so dear. I hope,' added he in a low voice, 'that you will permit me to come and make myself amends in some more tranquil moment.'—'I shall be very glad to see you,' replied Lucilia, blushing; and by her blushes, and the tender smile with which Blamzé accompanied a most respectful bow, the assembly judged that it would not be long before matters came to a conclusion. Lucilia, who

did not see the consequence of a few words said in her ear, and who did not think that she had made an assignation, scarce paid any attention to the meaning looks which the women cast on each other, or the light railleries which escaped the men. She delivered herself up insensibly to her own reflections, and was quite grave the whole evening. They often turned the conversation on Blamzé; all the company spoke well of him: his rivals talked of him with esteem; Lucilia's rivals spoke of him with complaisance. Nobody was more genteel, more gallant, more respectful; and of twenty women, on whose account he had reason to pride himself, not one had any reason to complain. Lucilia became attentive: nothing escaped her: 'Twenty women!' said she, within herself, 'that is much: but where is the wonder? He seeks one who may be worthy to fix him, and capable of fixing herself.'

She hoped the next day that he would come early, and before the crowd of visitors: she waited for him, she grew uneasy; he never came, she was out of temper; he writ, she read his billet, and her ill-humour ceased. He was distracted to lose the most agreeable moments of his life. Some impertinents had broke in upon him, he would have made his escape; but these impertinents were people of rank. It was not in his power to be happy till the next day; but he beseeched Lucilia to receive him early, 'to abridge,' said he, 'by a few hours, the cruel weariness of absence.' The company came as usual, and Lucilia received them with a coldness at which they were piqued. 'We shall not have Blamzé this evening,' said Clarissa with a disconsolate air; 'he goes to sup at Araminta's little box.' At these words Lucilia turned pale; and the gaiety which reigned around her only served to redouble the grief which she endeavoured to dissemble. Her first emotion was, not to see the perfidious man more. But Clarissa wanted, per-

haps, either out of malice or jealousy, to impute a wrong to him of which he was not guilty. It was, after all, engaging herself to nothing, to see him once more; and before condemning him, it was but just to hear him.

While she was yet at her toilette, Blamzé arrives in an undress, but the most elegant undress in the world. Lucilia was a little surprised to see a man whom she scarce knew appear in a deshabille; yet if he had given himself time to dress, perhaps she would have been sorry for it. But he said so many handsome things to her on the freshness of her complexion, the beauty of her hair, the brilliancy of her morning appearance, that she had not the courage to complain. However, Araminta did not go out of her head; but it would not have been decent to appear jealous so soon; and one reproach might betray her. She contented herself with asking him what he had done with himself the evening before.—'What did I do with myself! do I know myself? O, how troublesome the world is! How happy are we in being forgotten and far from the crowd, in being devoted to one's self, and the person we love! Follow my advice, Lucilia; get out of this whirlwind: the more repose, the more liberty as soon as we give ourselves up to it. Now I have mentioned the whirlwind, what do you do with all these young fellows who pay court to you? They dispute with each other the conquest of you: have you vouchsafed to make a choice?' The easy familiarity of Blamzé had at first astonished Lucilia; this question entirely confounded her. 'I am impertinent, perhaps?' resumed Blamzé, who perceived it. 'Not at all,' replied Lucilia with gentleness; 'I have nothing to conceal, and I am not afraid that any body should see through me. I amuse myself with the levity of these giddy young fellows, but not one of them seems to be worthy of a serious attachment.' Blamzé spoke of his rivals with indulgence, and thought that Lucilia judged

too severely of them. 'Cleon, for example,' said he, 'has something very amiable in him; he knows nothing as yet; it is a pity, for he speaks well enough of things which he is ignorant of; and he is a proof to me that with wit one may dispense with common sense. Clairfont is a coxcomb, but it is the first fire of his age, and he only wants to be disciplined by a woman who has seen life. Pomblac's disposition pronounces him a man of sentiment; and that simplicity, which looks so like silliness, would please me well enough if I were a woman: some coquette will make her advantage of him. Little Linval is conceited, but when he has been supplanted five or six times, people will not be surprised to see him grown modest. At present,' continued Blamzé, 'none of all these will suit you; we behold you, therefore, free: what use do you make of your freedom?'—'I endeavour to enjoy it,' replied Lucilia. 'That is mere childishness,' resumed the count; 'we never enjoy our freedom but in the moment when we renounce it; and we ought not to preserve it with care, but in order to lose it at a proper opportunity. You are young, you are handsome; do not flatter yourself with being long disengaged: if you will not resign your heart, it will resign itself; but among those who may pretend to it, it is of importance to make a right choice. As soon as you love, and even when you do not love, you will be beloved infallibly; that is not the point; but at your age women have need of finding in a lover a counsellor, a guide, a friend, a man formed by the custom of the world, and able to enlighten you in respect of the dangers you are going to run in it.'—'A man, like yourself, for example,' said Lucilia, in an ironical tone, and with a sneering smile. 'Yes, indeed,' continued Blamzé, 'I should do pretty well for your purpose, were it not for all this multitude that besieges me; but how to disengage myself from it?'—'Why do not disengage yourself from it

at all,' replied Lucilia: 'you would excite too many complaints, and make me too many enemies.' —'As to complaints,' said the count, coldly, 'I am accustomed to them. As to enemies, one never gives one's self the least concern about them when one has cause to be satisfied, and the good sense to live for one's self.'—'At my age,' said Lucilia, smiling, 'we are still too timorous; and though there were nothing further to experience in it than the despair of an Araminta, that alone would make me tremble.'—'An Araminta?' replied Blamzé, without any emotion, 'Araminta is a good creature, who hears reason, and who does not give herself up to despair. I see somebody has been talking to you of her; you shall have the whole account of my connexions with her. Araminta is one of those beauties, who, seeing themselves on the decline, that they may not fall into oblivion, and to revive their expiring consequence, have occasion from time to time to make some noise in the world. She has engaged me to pay her some small attentions, and to behave to her with some warmth. It would not have been handsome to refuse her; so I made myself subservient to her views. In order to give the more celebrity to our adventure, she has thought proper to take a little box. It was in vain that I represented to her that it was not worth while, for a month at most which I had to bestow on her: the box was furnished without my knowledge, and in the handsomest manner: she made me promise, and there lay the grand point, to sup with her there with an air of mystery: yesterday was the day appointed. Araminta, for the greater secrecy, invited nobody there but five of her female friends, and permitted me to carry only the like number of my friends. I went; assumed an air of pleasure; was gallant and warm towards her: in a word, I let all the guests go away, and did not retire myself till half an hour after them: this was all, in my opinion, that decorum required; and accordingly

and determine my inclination.'—'Not enough, madam! excuse me a little. Please to inform me what you would require more?'—'A more thorough knowledge of your temper, a more intimate persuasion of your sentiments for me. I promise you nothing; I forbid myself nothing; you have every thing to hope, but nothing to claim: you are to consider whether that suits you.'—'No price, without doubt, beautiful Lucilia, should be thought too dear to merit and obtain you: but seriously, would you have me renounce all the charms of the world to have my happiness depend on an uncertain contingency? I am, you know, and I am not conceited of it, I am the man the most sought after in all France; be it taste or fancy, it is no matter: it is her concern that should have me, though but for a time.'—'You are right,' said Lucilia; 'I was unreasonable, and your moments are too precious.'—'No, I confess to you seriously, that I am tired of being in fashion; I was looking out for an object that might fix me; I have found it; I attach myself; nothing can be more fortunate; but still this ought not to be to no purpose. You would have time for reflection; I give you twenty-four hours: I think that is very handsome, and I never gave so much time before.'—'My reflections are too slow,' replied Lucilia, 'and you are too much in a hurry for us to agree on this point. I am young, perhaps have sensibility: but my age and sensibility shall never engage me in an imprudent step. I have told you, if my heart yields, time, proofs, reflection, the pleasing habitude of confidence and esteem, will have decided its choice.'—'But, madam, in good earnest now, do you think to find an amiable man sufficiently disengaged to lose his time in spinning out an intrigue to this length? and do you yourself intend to pass your youth in consulting whether you shall love or no?'—'I cannot tell,' replied Lucilia, 'whether I shall ever love, or what time I shall employ in resolving; but that time

will not be lost, if it spares me regret.'—'I admire you, madam, I admire you,' said Blamzé, taking his leave; 'but I have not the honour to be of the ancient order of chivalry, and I did not come here so early to compose a romance with you.'

Lucilia, thunderstruck at the scene which she had just had with Blamzé, passed in a short time from astonishment to reflection. 'Is this, then,' said she, 'the man in vogue, the most amiable man in the world? He condescends to think me handsome; and if he believed me capable of constancy, he would be guilty of the folly of loving me in good earnest; but yet he has not time to wait till I have consulted myself! I must seize the moment of pleasing him, and determine in twenty-four hours: he never gave so much time before. Do the women then humble themselves thus, and the men thus prescribe them the conditions! happily he has made himself known to me. Under that modest air which had seduced me, what conceit, what presumption! ah! I see the most mortifying evil to a woman is that of loving a fop.'

The same day, after the opera, Lucilia's company being met together, Pomblac came to tell her, with an air of mystery, that she would have neither Blamzé nor Clairfont to sup with her. 'Very well,' said she, 'I require not of my friends any assiduity that constrains them: there are even such people whose assiduity would constrain me.'—'If Blamzé be of that number,' replied Pomblac frankly, 'Clairfont has delivered you from him, at least for some time.'—'How so?'—'Do not be frightened: all is very well over.'—'How, sir, what is over?'—'After the opera, the curtain being dropt, we were on the stage, and, according to custom, hearing Blamzé deciding on every thing. Having given us his opinion on the singing, the dancing, and the decorations, he asked us, if we were to sup at the little marchioness's? (pardon

me, madam, it was you he spoke of). We replied, 'Yes.' 'I shall not be there,' said he: 'we are in the pouts since this morning.' I asked what might be the cause of these pouts? Blamzé told us that you had made him an assignation; that he never came; that you were piqued at it; that he had made up that this morning; that you played the child; that he was in a hurry to conclude; that you had demanded time for reflection; and that, tired out with your *ifs* and your *buts*, he had left you in the lurch. He told us, that you wanted to set off with a serious engagement: that he had some inclination to it; but that he had not time enough on his hands; that on calculating the strength of the citadel, he had judged that it might sustain a siege; but that nothing would do for him but a surprise. 'It is an exploit that may suit some of you,' added he: 'you are young; it is the time when one loves to encounter difficulties, in order to overcome them; but I forewarn you, that virtue is her fort, and sensibility her weak part; every thing was concluded, if I had taken the trouble to play the passionate lover.'—'I was fully persuaded that he lied,' resumed the young man; 'but I had the prudence to be silent. Clairfont was not so patient as I: he signified to him, that he did not believe one word of his story: and at this declaration they went out together. I followed them. Clairfont received a wound.'—'And Blamzé . . . . ?'—'Blamzé has two, of which he will not recover without some difficulty. While I helped him to get into his coach, 'If Clairfont,' said he, 'knows how to make an advantage of this adventure, he will carry Lucilia. A woman defends herself but ill against a man who defends her so well. Tell him that I dispense with this being a secret to her; it is just that she should know what she owes to her knight.'

Lucilia had all the difficulty in the world to conceal the trouble and consternation which this

story gave her. She feigned a head-ache, and it is well known that a head-ache, in a handsome woman, is a civil way of dismissing impertinents: so they left her alone at their rising from table.

Delivered up to herself, Lucilia could not console herself for having been the subject of a duel, which would make her the town-talk. She was strongly touched by the warmth with which Clairfont had revenged the affront offered her; but what an humiliation to her if this adventure should make a noise, and Lisere should be informed of it? Happily the secret was kept. Pomblac and Clairfont made a point of saving Lucilia's honour; and Blamzé, being cured of his wounds, was far from boasting of an imprudence by which he had been so severely punished. It will be asked, perhaps, how a man till then so discreet came all of a sudden to cease to be so?- It is because we are under less temptation to publish favours which we obtain, than to avenge ourselves for the rigours we undergo. This first indiscretion had like to have cost him his life. He was for a month on the brink of the grave. Clairfont had less difficulty to get his wound cured, and Lucilia saw him again with a tenderness hitherto unknown to him. If we attach ourselves to any one who has exposed his life for us, we attach ourselves as naturally to the person for whom we have exposed our life; and such services perhaps are stronger ties to the person who has performed them than to the party for whom they were performed. Clairfont then became desperately in love with Lucilia; but the more she owed him in return, the less he dared to require any thing of her: he found a sensible pleasure in being generous, and he ceased to be so if he availed himself of the rights he had acquired to Lucilia's gratitude: accordingly he was more timorous than if he had merited nothing; but Lucilia read his soul, and this delicacy took the strongest hold of her. In the mean time, the fear of appearing to

want gratitude, or the dread of carrying it too far, made her dissemble her knowledge of the intelligence Pomblac had given her; thus the good will she testified towards Clairfont appeared free and disinterested, and he was so much the more affected by it. Their mutual inclination every day made a sensible progress. They sought one another with their eyes, conferred with intimacy, listened to each other with complaisance, gave one another an account of their proceedings, in reality, without affectation, and, as it were, for the sake of saying something; but with so much exactness, that they knew, almost to a minute, the hour at which they were to see each other again. Clairfont insensibly became more familiar, and Lucilia less reserved. Nothing remained but to explain themselves; for which purpose there was no need of those marvellous incidents which love sometimes sends to the assistance of bashful lovers. One day that they were alone, Lucilia let her fan drop; Clairfont picks it up, and presents it to her; she receives it with a pleasing smile: that smile inspires the lover with the courage to kiss her hand; that hand was the most beautiful hand in the world, and from the moment that Clairfont's lips were applied to it, she was unable to withdraw it. Lucilia, in her emotion, made a slight effort to draw back her hand; he opposed a gentle violence, and his eyes, tenderly fixed on Lucilia's eyes, entirely disarmed her. Their looks had expressed every thing before their tongues interfered; and the mutual confession of their love was made and returned in two words. 'I breathe; we love,' said Clairfont, intoxicated with joy. 'Alas! yes, we do love,' replied Lucilia, with a profound sigh; 'it is no longer time to deny it. But remember that I am bound by duties: those duties are inviolable, and, if I am dear to you, they will be sacred.'

Lucilia's inclination was not one of those fashionable passions which stifle shame in their infancy,

and Clairfont respected it too much to take advantage of it as a weakness. Transported with being loved, he for a long time confined his desires to the delicious possession of a heart pure, virtuous, and faithful. 'How little we love,' said he to himself in his delirium, 'when we are not made happy by the single pleasure of loving! Who was the stupid savage who first branded with the name of rigour that resistance which timid modesty opposes to wild desire? Is there, beautiful Lucilia, is there a denial which your looks would not soften? Can I complain when you smile upon me? And has my soul any wishes still to form, when my eyes draw from yours that heavenly voluptuousness with which you intoxicate all my senses? Far be from us, I consent to it, all those pleasures followed by regrets, which would trouble the serenity of your life. I respect your virtue as much as you cherish it yourself, and I shall never pardon myself the having caused any remorse to spring up in the bosom of innocence itself.' Sentiments so heroic charmed Lucilia; and Clairfont, more tender every day, was every day more beloved, more happy, and more worthy to be so. But at length the railleries of his friends, and the suspicions they excited in him with respect to that virtue which he adored, embittered his happiness. He became gloomy, uneasy, jealous; every thing vexed him, every thing gave him umbrage. Lucilia every day perceived her chain become closer and heavier; every day there were new complaints to hear, new reproaches to undergo. Every man that she received with civility was a rival whom she must banish. The first sacrifices that he required were made without opposition; he demanded new ones, he obtained them; he wanted still more, she was weary of obeying him. Clairfont imagined he saw in Lucilia's impatience an invincible attachment to the connexions which he

prohibited; and that love, at first so delicate and submissive, became fierce and tyrannical. Lucilia was terrified; she sought to appease him, but to no purpose. 'I will not believe,' said the imperious Clairfont, 'I will not believe that you love me till you live for me alone, as I do for you. What! if I possess, if I fill your soul, what do you do with this troublesome crowd? Ought it to cost you any thing to banish what afflicts me? Would it cost me any pain to renounce every thing that would displease you? What do I say? Is it not a continual violence that I do myself to see any thing but Lucilia? Would to heaven we were freed from this crowd, which besieges you, and which deprives me every moment either of your looks or your thoughts! The solitude that so terrifies you would complete all my wishes. Are not our souls of the same nature? Or the love which you think you feel, is it not the same that I feel? You complain that I demand sacrifices of you! Require, Lucilia, require in your turn; choose the most painful, the most grievous trials; you shall see whether I hesitate. There is no connexion which I would not break, no effort which I would not make; or rather I should not make any. The pleasure of gratifying you will make me amends, will serve instead of every thing; and what they call denials would be to me enjoyments.'—'You think so, Clairfont,' replied the tender and ingenuous Lucilia; 'but you deceive yourself. Each of these denials is but little; but all together make up a great deal. It is the continuance of them that is tiresome: you have made me know by experience, that no complaisance is inexhaustible.'—While she spoke thus, Clairfont's eyes, sparkling with impatience, were sometimes turned up to heaven, and sometimes fixed on her. 'Believe me,' continued Lucilia, 'the sacrifices of true love are made in the heart, and under the veil of mys-

bary: self-love alone demands public ones: to that victory is little: it aspires to the honours of a triumph; and that is what you exact.'

'What a cold analysis,' cried he, 'and what vain metaphysics! Love, to be sure, reasons thus! I love you, madam; nothing, to my misfortune, is truer: I would sacrifice a thousand lives to please you; and whatever may be this sentiment which you call self-love, it detaches me from the whole world to deliver myself up solely to you! but in abandoning myself thus, I would possess you in the same manner. Cleon, Linval, Pomblac, all these are sufficient to make me uneasy: I cannot answer for myself. After this, if you love me, nothing ought to be more precious to you than my repose; and my uneasiness, were it even a folly, you ought to dissipate. But why do I say a folly? You render my alarms and suspicions but too reasonable. And how should I be easy, when I see that every one who comes near you engages you more than myself?'

'Ah, sir! what acknowledgments do I owe you!' said Lucilla, with a sigh: 'you make me see the depth of the abyss into which love was going to plunge me. Yes, I see that there is no slavery comparable to that which a jealous lover imposes.'—'I, madam, do I make you a slave? Have not you even an absolute empire over me? Do not you do what you please with me?'—'Enough, sir: I have suffered a long time; I flattered myself; but you now draw me out of my illusion, and nothing can lead me into it again. Be my friend, if you can be so: it is the only title that remains to you with me.'—'Ah, cruel woman! would you have my death?'—'I want nothing but your ease and my own.'—'You overwhelm me. What is my crime?'—'Loving yourself too well, and not esteeming me enough'—'Ah! I swear to you.'—'Swear nothing: your jealousy is a vice in your disposition, and the disposition never corrects itself.

I know you, Clairfont; I begin to dread you, and cease to love you. This very moment I see my frankness makes you desperate; but of two punishments I choose the shortest; and by taking away from you the right of being jealous, I create you the happy necessity of ceasing to be so.'—'I know you in my turn,' replied Clairfont, with a stifled rage: 'the delicacy of a sensible soul ill agrees with the levity of yours; it is a Blamze that you must have for a lover, and I was a fool to take it ill . . . .'—'Go no farther,' interrupted Lucilia; 'I know all that I owe to you; but I retire to spare you the shame of having reproached me with it.'

Clairfont went off in a rage, and fully resolved never more to revisit a woman whom he had so tenderly loved, and who had dismissed him with so much inhumanity.

Lucilia, restored to herself, found herself, as it were, relieved from a burthen that overwhelmed her. But, on one side, the dangers of love, which she had just experienced, on the other, the sad prospect of everlasting indifference, suffered her to hope hereafter for nothing but cruel disquiétudes, or insupportable dulness. 'What,' said she, 'has Heaven given me a sensible heart only to make me the sport of a fop, the victim of a tyrant, or the gloomy companion of a kind of philosopher, neither affected nor moved at any thing?' These reflections plunged her into a languor which she was not able to conceal: her company perceived it, and became soon as melancholy as herself. The women to whom her house was a rendezvous were alarmed at it. 'She is lost,' said they, 'if we draw her not out of this sad state; she is disgusted with the world: she loves nothing but solitude; the symptoms of her melancholy become every day more terrible, and, by the force of some violent passion which agitates her, it is to be feared that she will fall again into the power of her husband.

Do we know nobody to turn this young head? Blainzé himself set about it the wrong way, and did not succeed: as to Clairfont, on whom we depended, he is a little fool who loves likes a madman; no wonder she should be affronted.'—'Hold,' said Cephisa, after being lost in thought for some time; 'Lucilia has a romantic way of thinking; she must have something in the fairy taste, and the magnificent Dorimon is exactly the man that suits her. She will grow mad for him, I am sure; let us engage him only to go and invite her to supper at his fine country-house: I will take upon me to give him his lesson.' The party was accepted, and Dorimon made acquainted with it.

Dorimon was the man in the world who knew best the most able artists, received them with the best grace, and recompensed them most liberally; accordingly he had the reputation of a connoisseur, and a man of taste.

If, some centuries hence, this tale should be read, they may imagine it mere fiction, and the habitation I am going to describe may pass for a fairy castle: but it is not my fault if the luxury of our times comes in competition with the marvellous of fables, and if, in the representation of our follies, probability should be wanting to truth.

On the rich banks of the Seine arises, in form of an amphitheatre, a small eminence exposed to the first rays of the morning, and the ardent fires of noon. The forest which crowns it defends it from the chilling blast of the north, and the watery influence of the west. From the summit of the hill fall in cascades three copious springs of water, purer than crystal, which the industrious hand of art has conducted by a thousand windings over green slopes. Sometimes these waters divide themselves, and glide along in meanders; sometimes they re-unite in basins, in which the heavens behold themselves with delight; then they precipitate themselves, and pour along, dashing against

rocks cut out in grottoes, in which the chisel has imitated the fanciful varieties of nature. The Seine, which forms a bow at the foot of the hill, receives them into his peaceable bosom; and their fall recals to our minds those fabulous times in which the nymphs of the mountains descended into the humid palace of the rivers, to temper the ardors of youth and of loves.

An ingenious whimsicalness seems to have designed the gardens watered by these streams. All sides of this smiling scene agree without sameness: the very symmetry is striking: the eye roves without lassitude, and reposes without dulness. A noble elegance, a richness well managed, a bold, and yet delicate taste, have been employed in embellishing them. Nothing is neglected; nothing forced or laboured with too much art. The concourse of simple beauties forms all its magnificence; and the equilibrium of masses, joined to the variety of forms, produces that beautiful harmony which forms the delight of beholders.

Groves ornamented with statues, lattice-work fashioned into arbours and bowers, decorate all the known gardens; but these riches, displayed without understanding and taste, generally excite nothing more than a cold and dull admiration, soon attended with satiety. Here the disposition and connexion of the parts form of a thousand different sensations but one continued enchantment. The second object that is discovered adds to the pleasure raised by the first; and both are still further embellished by the charms of the new object that succeeds, without effacing them.

This delicious landscape is terminated by a palace of such airy architecture, that the Corinthian order itself has less elegance and lightness. Here the columns imitated the palm-trees united in arbours. The roof of the vault, formed of palms, composes a chapiter more natural and as noble as the vase of Callimachus. These palms are inter-

woven among each other in the interstices of the columns, and their natural wreathings concealed from the deceived eye the heaviness of the entablature. As these columns are sufficient for the weight of the edifice, they leave a continued transparency to the walls, by means of chasms artfully contrived. We see none of those redoubled roofs which crush our modern architecture; and the frightful irregularity of our Gothic chimneys is lost in the crown-work.

The interior luxury of the palace is suitable to the magnificence without. It is, in short, the temple of the arts and of taste. The pencil, the chisel, the graving tool, every thing that industry has invented for the delicacies of life, is there displayed with a discreet profusion; and the Pleasures, the daughters of Opulence, there flatter the soul through all the senses.

Lucilia was dazzled with so much magnificence; the first evening appeared to her a dream: it was nothing but one continued scene of shows and feastings, of which she plainly perceived herself was the divinity. The earnestness, the vivacity, the gallantry with which Dorimon did the honours of this beautiful dwelling; the changes of scene which he produced with one single look; the absolute empire which he seemed to exercise over the arts and pleasures; recalled to Lucilia's imagination every thing that she had read of the most celebrated enchanters. She dared not trust her eyes, and even thought herself enchanted. If Dorimon had availed himself of the intoxication into which she was plunged, the dream perhaps had ended after the manner of modern romances. But Dorimon was merely gallant; and all he had the courage to permit himself to do was to ask Lucilia to come sometimes and embellish his hermitage; for so he called this mansion.

Lucilia's companions had observed her with at-

tention. The most experienced judged that Dorimon was too much taken up with his magnificence, and too little with his happiness. 'He ought,' said they, 'to have seized the first moment of surprise: it is a kind of transport which we do not feel twice.'

In the mean time Lucilia's head being filled with all that she had just seen, she formed to herself the most wonderful idea of Dorimon himself. So much gallantry bespoke an imagination brisk and sprightly, a cultivated genius, a delicate taste, and a lover, if ever there was one, wholly taken up with the care of pleasing. This portrait, though a little too flattering, was not wholly unlike. Dorimon was yet young, of an engaging figure, and a most joyous temper. His wit was all in sallies; he had in his way of thinking little warmth, but much refinement. Nobody said more gallant things; but he had not the gift of enforcing them: every body loved to hear him, but nobody believed him. He was the most seducing man in the world for a coquette, the least dangerous to a woman of sentiment.

She consented to see him again at his own house, and this gave occasion to new entertainments. But in vain had the gallantry of Dorimon reassembled there all the pleasures which she had given birth to; in vain were these pleasures varied every instant with as much art as taste: Lucilia was at first slightly moved, soon after satiated; and before the close of the day, she conceived it possible to grow dull in this delicious abode. Dorimon, who never quitted her, exerted all the talents of pleasing: he held her in discourse on a thousand ingenious subjects, he mingled also some soft things with them; but still this was not what she had conceived. She thought to find a god, and Dorimon was but a man; the pomp of his house eclipsed him; proportions were not observed;

and Dorimon, while he surpassed himself, was all the while inferior to the idea which every thing around him inspired.

He was very far from suspecting the injury which this comparison did him in the imagination of Lucilia, and he waited only one happy moment to avail himself of his advantages. After the concert, and before supper, he led her, as it were by chance, into a solitary closet, where she might go, he said, and ruminate, when she should have any moments of pouting. The door opens, and Lucilia sees her image reflected a thousand times in the dazzling pier-glasses; the voluptuous paintings with which the pannels were covered multiplied themselves around her. Lucilia, admiring herself, thought she beheld the goddess of loves. At this sight an exclamation of surprise and admiration escaped her, and Dorimon seized the instant of this sudden emotion. 'Reign here, there is your throne,' said he to her, showing her a sofa, which the hand of fairies had sown with flowers. 'My throne!' said Lucilia, seating herself, and with a tone of gaiety; 'well, ay, I like it pretty well, and I find myself the queen of a mighty pretty people.' She spoke of the multitudes of loves which she perceived in the glasses. 'Amidst these subjects, will you condescend, madam, to admit me?' said Dorimon with ardour, and throwing himself at her feet. 'Ah! as to you,' said she with a serious air, 'you are no child;' and at these words she would have got up, but he retained her with a strong hand, and the effort she made to escape rendered him still bolder. 'Where am I, then?' said she with terror: 'let me go, let me go, I say, or my cries .....' These words awed him. 'Excuse, madam,' said he, 'an imprudence, of which you are yourself in some measure the cause. To come here *tête-à-tête*, and repose yourself on this sofa, as you have done, is giving to understand, according to

the received custom, that a little violence would not be ill taken. With you I see plainly that it means nothing; we misunderstood each other.'—'Oh! very much,' said Lucilia, going out in a rage; and Dorimon followed her, a little confounded at his mistake. Happily their absence had not been long enough to give time for slander to speak ill of it. Lucilia, dissembling her perturbation, told the company that she had just been seeing a very fine cabinet. They ran there in a body; and their exclamations of admiration were only interrupted by the coming in of supper.

The sumptuousness of this feast seemed to improve still upon all the pleasures that they had tasted. But Dorimon endeavoured in vain to do the honours of it; he had lost that gaiety which was so natural to him; and Lucilia replied to the gallant things he addressed to her, in order to draw her out of her reverie, only by a forced smile, with which good breeding endeavours to disguise ill-humour.

'There,' said her friends to her, on going home with her, 'there now is a man who suits you: with him life is a continual enchantment; it appears as if all the pleasures obeyed his voice: the moment he commands, they arrive in troops.'

'There are some,' said Lucilia, coldly, 'which cannot be commanded: they are above riches; we find them only in our hearts.'—'Upon my word, my dear,' said Cephisa to her, 'you are very difficult.'—'Yes, madam, very difficult,' replied she, with a sigh: and during the rest of the journey they kept a profound silence. 'This is nothing but a handsome woman spoilt,' said her friends, at quitting her. 'Yet if her whims were cheerful ones, we might amuse ourselves with them; but nothing in the world is more gloomy. It was worth while indeed to separate from her husband, to be a prude to the rest of the world!'

'Is this then the world so much boasted of?' said

Lucilla, on her side: 'I have passed rapidly through every thing agreeable in it: what have I found? a coxcomb, a jealous lover, a vain man, who arrogates to himself, as so many charms, his gardens, his palace, and his entertainments, and who thinks that the severest virtue can desire no better than to yield to him. Ah! how I hate those makers of romances, who have lulled me with their fables! My imagination filled with a thousand chimeras, I thought my husband insipid; and yet he is worth more than all I have seen. He is plain; but is not his plainness a thousand times preferable to the vain pretensions of a Blamzé? He is temperate in his affections; and what would become of me if he were violent and passionate like Clairfont? He loved me little, but he loved only me; and if I had been reasonable, he loved me enough to make me happy. I had not with him those pompous and noisy pleasures which intoxicate at first, and soon after cloy; but his complaisance, his sweetness, his delicate attentions, furnished me every moment with pleasures, the most pure and solid, if I had but known how to relish them. Fool that I was! I pursued illusions, and fled happiness itself: it is placed in the silence of the passions, the equilibrium and repose of the soul. But, alas! it is a fine time to acknowledge my errors, when they have made me lose the friendship, the confidence, perhaps the esteem, of my husband. Thank Heaven, I have nothing to reproach myself with but the indiscretions of my age. But is Lisere obliged to believe me in this point, and would he vouchsafe to hear me? Ah! how difficult is it to return to one's duty, when we have once abandoned it! difficult! and why? who hinders me? the dread of being humbled? But Lisere is a good man; and if he has spared me in my errors, would he distress me in my reformation? I have but to detach myself

from a pernicious society, to live at home, with such of my female friends as my husband respects, and whom I can see without blushing. All the while that he has seen me delivered up to the world, he has never come near me: but if he sees me restored to myself, he will condescend perhaps to recal me to him; and if his heart be not restored to me, the only consolation that remains to me, is that of rendering myself worthy of it: I shall be at least reconciled to myself, if I cannot be so to my husband.'

Lisere, full of grief, had kept sight of her through all her whirl of company: he depended on the justness of her way of thinking, and the probity of her soul. 'She will perceive,' said he, 'the frivolousness of the pleasures which she seeks, the folly of the women, the vanity of the men, the falsity of both; and, if she returns virtuous, her virtue will be but the more confirmed by the dangers it has run. But will she have escaped all the shelves that surround her; the charms of flattery, the snares of seduction, the attractions of pleasure? We despise the world when we know it thoroughly; but we give ourselves up to it before we know it, and the heart is frequently lost before reason enlightens it. O Lucilia!' cried he, looking at the portrait of his wife, which in solitude was his only conversation, 'O Lucilia! you were so deserving of being happy! and I flattered myself that you would be so with me. Alas! perhaps some one of those handsome corrupters, who form at once the ornament and misfortune of the world, is at this very time employed in seducing her innocence, and is bent upon her defeat, merely for the pleasure of boasting of it. What, would my wife's shame raise an eternal barrier between us! It would no longer be permitted me to live with her, from whom death alone ought to separate me! I have

betrayed her in abandoning her. Heaven had chosen me for the guardian of her imprudent and frail youth. I have consulted only custom, and I have been struck only by the frightful idea of being hated as a tyrant.'

While Lisere floated thus in this cruel uncertainty, Lucilia was not less agitated between the desire of returning, and the dread of being repulsed. Twenty times had she risen, after passing the night with sighs and tears, with the resolution of going to wait his rising, in order to throw herself at his feet, and ask his pardon. But a shame, well known to sensible and delicate souls, had still withheld her footsteps. If Lisere did not despise her, if he still preserved any feeling for her, any esteem; from the time when she had broken off with her parties, from the time that she had lived retired and solitary, how came it that he had never vouchsafed to see her even once? Every day, as he went by, he inquired after his lady's health: she heard of it; she hoped that at last he would ask to see her; each day this hope was renewed: she expected, all trembling, the moment of Lisere's calling; she drew as near as possible, in order to listen to him, and retired in tears, after having heard him ask, as he went along, *How does my lady do?* She could have wished to have Lisere informed of her repentance, of her return to herself. 'But to whom can I trust?' said she: 'to friends? is there one of them faithful enough, discreet enough, wise enough, for so delicate an interposition? Some of them might have the talents, but had not the zeal; and others had the zeal, but not the talents: besides, it is so hard to trust to others what we dare not confess ourselves! A letter . . . .; but what shall I write to him? general expressions would not touch him, and particulars are so humiliating!' At length a thought came into her head, by which her de-

licacy and sensibility were equally satisfied. Lisere had absented himself for two days, and Lucilia seized the opportunity of his absence to execute her design.

Lisere had an old servant, whom Lucilia saw melting into tears at the moment of their separation, and whose zeal, honesty, and discretion, were well known to her. 'Ambrose,' said she to him, 'I have a favour to ask of you.'—'Ah! madam,' said the good man, 'command me; I am yours, with all my soul: would to God that you and my master loved one another as I love you! I know not which of you is wrong; but I am sorry for you both: it would be delightful to see you together; and I see nothing here which does not give me sorrow, ever since you have been on ill terms.'—'It is perhaps my fault,' said Lucilia, humiliated: 'but, my dear Ambrose, the evil is not without remedy: only do what I shall tell you. You know that my portrait is in your master's chamber.'—'Oh! yes, madam, he knows it very well too; for he sometimes shuts himself up with it for whole days: it is all his consolation. He looks at it, he talks to it, he sighs most pitifully; and I see plainly that the poor gentleman would still much rather converse with you than with your picture.'—'You tell me very comfortable news, my dear Ambrose; but go and take away that portrait privately, and choose, in order to bring it me, a time when you may not be seen by any body.'—'I, madam, deprive my master of all that he holds dearest in the world! rather ask my life.'—'Be assured,' replied Lucilia, 'my design is not to deprive him of it. To-morrow evening thou shalt come and fetch it, to put it in its place again: I will only beg of you to say nothing to my husband.'—'Very well,' said Ambrose, 'I know that you are goodness itself, and you would not now at the latter end of my life

give me the mortification of having made my master uneasy.' The faithful Ambrose executed Lucilia's order. She had in her portrait the tender and languishing air which was natural to her; but her look was serene, and her hair set with flowers. She sent for her painter, ordered him to draw her with her hair dishevelled, and to paint the tears trickling from her eyes. As soon as her idea was carried into execution, the picture was replaced in Lisere's apartment. He comes into it, and his eyes are soon raised on the dear object. It is easy to conceive how great was his surprise. The dishevelled hair strikes him first: he draws near, and sees the tears flow. 'Ah!' cried he, 'Ah, Lucilia! are these the tears of repentance? Is that the sorrow of love?' He goes out transported; he flies to her, he seeks her with his eyes, and he finds her in the same situation as the picture had represented her. Immoveable for a moment, he eyes her with tenderness; and suddenly throwing himself at her feet, 'Is it really true,' said he, 'that my wife is restored to me?'—'Yes,' said Lucilia, with sighs, 'yes, if you think her still worthy of you?'—'Can she have ceased to be so.' replied Lisere, locking her in his arms. 'No, my dear, be comforted: I know your soul, and I have never ceased to mourn and esteem you. You would not return to me, if the world had been able to seduce you, and this voluntary return is the proof of your virtue.'—'Oh! thank Heaven,' said she (her heart being eased by the tears which flowed in abundance from her eyes), 'thank Heaven, I have no shameful weakness to blush at: I have been foolish, but not dishonest.'—'If I doubted it, would you now be in my bosom?' replied Lisere: and at these words .... but who can describe the transports of two sensible hearts, which, after having groaned under a cruel separation, were re-united for ever? On learning their

reconciliation, the family were filled with joy, and the good Ambrose said, his eyes swimming with tears, 'God be praised! I shall now die content.'

From that day, the tender union of this pair serves as an example to all those of their age. Their divorce has convinced them that the world had nothing that could make either of them amends: and this is what I call a HAPPY DIVORCE.

ANNETE AND LUBIN.

A TRUE STORY.

If it be dangerous to tell every thing to children, it is more dangerous still to leave them in ignorance of every thing. There are grievous crimes according to the laws, which are not so in the eyes of nature: and we are now going to see into what an abyss the latter leads innocence when she has a fillet over her eyes.

Annete and Lubin were the children of two sisters. These strict ties of blood ought to be incompatible with those of marriage. But Annete and Lubin had no suspicion that there were in the world other laws than the simple laws of nature. From the age of eight years they kept sheep together on the smiling banks of the Seine. They now touched on their sixteenth: but their youth differed not from infancy but by a warmer sentiment of mutual friendship.

Annete, beneath a plain country coif, bound back negligently her ebon hair. Two large blue eyes sparkled beneath her long eye-lashes, and expressed most innocently every thing which the dull eyes of our cold coquettes endeavour to express. Her rosy lips seemed to solicit to be kissed. Her complexion, tanned by the sun, was enlivened by that light shade of purple which colours the down of the peach. Every part of her which the veils of modesty concealed from the rays of noon, effaced the whiteness of the lily: we thought we saw the head of a lively Brunette on the shoulders of a beautiful Blonde.

Lubin had that decisive, open, and joyous air, which proclaims a free and contented mind. His

look was that of desire; his laugh the laugh of joy. When he burst out, he displayed teeth whiter than ivory. The freshness of his round cheeks invited the hand to pat them. Add to all this a nose in the air, a dimple in the chin, white silver locks, curled by the hand of nature; a genteel make, a deliberate pace, the frankness of the golden age, which suspects and blushes at nothing. This was the portrait of Annete's cousin.

Philosophy brings man back nearer to nature, and it is for this reason that instinct sometimes resembles it. I should not be surprised then if my shepherds should be imagined to be somewhat philosophical; but I forewarn my readers that it is without their knowing it.

As they both went frequently to sell fruits and milk in the city, and as people were glad to see them, they had an opportunity of observing what passed in the world, and of giving an account to each other of their little reflections. They compared their lot to that of the most opulent citizens, and found themselves happier and wiser. 'The senseless creatures!' said Lubin. 'During the finest part of the year they shut themselves up in quarries! Is it not true, Annete, that our hut is preferable to those magnificent prisons which they call palaces? When the thatch that covers us is burnt up by the sun, I go to the neighbouring forest, and in less than an hour make you a new house more cheerful than the former. The air and the light are ours. A branch less gives us the freshness of the east or the north; a branch more defends us from the heats of the south and the rains of the west: that is not very dear, Annete?'

'No, truly,' said she; 'and I cannot think why in the fine weather they do not come all two and two, to live in a pretty hut. Have you seen, Lubin, those tapestries of which they are so vain? What comparison between them and our beds of verdure? How we sleep on them! how we wake!'

'And you, Annete, have you remarked what trouble they take to give a rural air to the walls which shut them up? Those landscapes which they endeavour to imitate, nature has made for us; it is for us that the sun shines; it is for us that the seasons delight to vary themselves.'—'Right,' said Annete; 'I carried the other day some strawberries to a lady of quality; they were entertaining her with music. Ah, Lubin, what a terrible noise! I said in myself, why does she not come some morning and hear our nightingales? The unhappy woman was laid down upon cushions; and she yawned in such a manner as to move pity. I asked what ailed her ladyship; they told me that she had the vapours. Do you know, Lubin, what the vapours are?'—'No, not I; but I am afraid they are one of those distempers which one gets in the city, and which take away from persons of quality the use of their legs. That is very sad, is it not, Annete? And if they were to hinder you from running upon the grass, you would be very sorry, I believe!'—'O, very sorry; for I love to run, especially, Lubin, when I run after you.'

Such was pretty nearly the philosophy of Lubin and Annete. Free from envy and ambition, their state had nothing humiliating to them, nothing painful. They passed the fine weather in that green hut, the master-piece of Lubin's art. In the evening they were obliged to lead back their flocks to the village; but the fatigue and pleasures of the day prepared them a tranquil repose. The morning recalled them to the fields, more earnest to see each other again. Sleep effaced in their lives nothing but the moment of absence: it preserved them from dulness. Nevertheless, a happiness so pure was not unalterable. The slender waist of Annete insensibly became rounder. She knew not the cause of it; Lubin himself did not suspect it.

The bailiff of the village was the first who per-

ceived it. 'God defend you, Annete,' said he to her one day; 'you seem to be very round!'—'True,' said she, dropping a curtsy. 'But, Annete, what has happened to this handsome shape? Have you had any love affair!'—'Any love affair, not that I know.'—'Ah! child! nothing is more certain; you have listened to some of our young fellows.'—'Yes, truly, I do listen to them: does that spoil the shape?'—'No, not that; but some of them have a kindness for you.'—'Kindness for me! Ay, Lubin and I are kind to each other all the day long.'—'And you have granted him every thing, is it not so?'—'Oh Lord, yes: Lubin and I have nothing to refuse one another.'—'How, nothing to refuse one another!'—'Oh, nothing at all; I should be very sorry if he kept any thing to himself, and more sorry still to have him believe that I have any thing which is not his. Are we not cousins?'—'Cousins!'—'Cousins german, I tell you.'—'O heaven!' cried the bailiff, 'here is an adventure!'—'Ay, or else do you think that we should have been every day together? that we should have had but one and the same hut? I have heard it said, indeed, that the shepherds are to be dreaded; but a cousin is not dangerous.' The judge continued to interrogate. Annete continued to reply; insomuch that it was clearer than the day that she would shortly be a mother. Become a mother before marriage! that was a riddle to Annete. The bailiff explained it to her. 'What,' said he to her, 'the first time that this misfortune happened, did not the sun hide himself? did not the heavens thunder upon you?'—'No,' replied Annete; 'I remember it was the finest weather in the world.'—'Did not the earth shake! did it not open itself!'—'Alas, no,' said Annete again; 'I saw it covered with flowers.'—'And do you know what a crime you have committed?'—'I know not what a crime is; but all that we have done, I swear to you, was in good

friendship, and without any ill design: you think that I am big with child; I should never have thought it; but if it be so, I am very glad of it: I shall have a little Lubin, perhaps.'—'No,' replied, the man of law, 'you will bring into the world a child, which will own neither its father nor mother, which will be ashamed of its birth, and will reproach you for it. What have you done, unhappy girl, what have you done! How I pity you! and how I pity that innocent!' These last words made Annete grow pale and tremble. Lubin found her all in tears. 'Hear,' said she to him with terror, 'do you know what has happened? I am big with child.'—'With child, and by whom?'—'By you.'—'You joke. And how has that happened?'—'The bailiff has just explained it to me.'—'Well?'—'Well, when we thought we were only showing kindness to each other, we were making love.'—'That is droll!' said Lubin: 'only see how we come into the world. But you are in tears, my dear Annete! Is it this that makes you uneasy?' 'Yes, the bailiff has made me tremble: my child, he said, will own neither its father nor mother: he will reproach us with his birth.'—'Why?'—'Because we are cousins, and have committed a crime. Do you know Lubin, what a crime is?'—'Yes, it is a wicked thing. For example, it is a crime to take away life from any one; but it is not to give it. The bailiff does not know what he says.'—'Ah, my dear Lubin! go and find him out, I beseech thee: I am all of a tremble. He has put I know not what into my soul, which embitters all the pleasure I had in loving thee.'

Lubin ran to the bailiff. 'A word, if you please, Mr. Judge,' said he, accosting him: 'you will have it that I am not to be the father of my own child, and that Annete is not to be its mother!'—'Ah, wretch! dare you show yourself,' said the bailiff, 'after ruining this young innocent?'—'You are a

wretch yourself,' replied Lubin. 'I have not ruined Annete; she waits me now in our hut. But it is you, wicked man, that (she says) have put I know not what into her soul, that grieves her; and it is very ill done to afflict Annete.'—'You young villain, it is you that have stolen from her her chief good.'—'And what is that?'—'Innocence and honour.'—'I love her more than my life,' said the shepherd; 'and if I have done her any injury, I am here to repair it. Marry us: who hinders you? We ask no better.'—'That is impossible.'—'Impossible! And why? The most difficult part in my opinion is over, seeing we are now father and mother.'—'And there is the crime,' cried the judge: 'you must separate, you must fly each other.'—'Fly each other! And have you the heart to propose it to me, Mr. Bailiff? And who is to take care of Annete and my child? Quit them! I would sooner die.'—'The law obliges thee to it,' said the bailiff. 'There is no law that holds good there,' replied Lubin, clapping on his hat. 'We have a child without you, and if it please Heaven we will have more, and we will love for ever.'—'Ah, the audacious young knave, what rebel against the law!'—'Ah, the wicked man, the bad heart, that wants me to abandon Annete! Let me go and find out our parson,' said he to himself: 'he is a good man, and will have pity on us.' The priest was severer than the judge, and Lubin retired, confounded at having offended Heaven without knowing it. 'For after all,' said he still, 'we have done nobody any harm.'

'My dear Annete,' cried Lubin on seeing her again, 'every body condemns us; but no matter: I will never leave you.'—'I am big with child,' said Annete, reclining her face on her two hands, which she bathed with tears, 'and I cannot be your wife! Leave me, I am distressed; I have no longer any pleasure in seeing you. Alas! I am ashamed of myself, and I reproach myself for all the moments

that I have passed with you.'—'Ah, the cursed bailiff,' said Lubin; 'but for him we were so happy!'

From that moment, Annete, a prey to her grief, could not endure the light. If Lubin wanted to console her, he saw her tears stream afresh; she replied to his caresses only by pushing him off with horror. 'What! my dear Annete,' said he to her, 'am I no longer the Lubin you loved so much?'—'Alas! no: you are no longer the same. I tremble the moment you come near me; my child who moves in my womb, and whom I should have had so much joy in feeling, seems already to complain that I have given him my own cousin for a father.'—'You will hate my child, then?' said Lubin to her sobbing. 'Oh no, no, I shall love it with all my soul!' said she. 'At least they will not forbid me to love my child, to give him my milk and my life. But that child will hate its mother: the judge has foretold it to me.'—'Don't mention that old devil,' said Lubin, clasping her in his arms, and bathing her with tears; 'your child shall love you, my dear Annete; he will love you, for I am its father.'

Lubin in despair employed all the eloquence of nature and love to dissipate Annete's fear and grief. 'Let us see,' said he, 'what have we done to anger Heaven? We have led out our flocks to feed in the same meadows; there is no harm in that. I have built a hut, you have taken pleasure in reposing in it; there is no harm in that. You slept upon my knees; I drew in your breath, and that I might not lose one gasp, I drew gently near you; there was no harm yet. It is true, that sometimes awakened by my caresses . . . . .'—'Alas!' said she sighing, 'there was no harm in that.'

It was in vain that they recalled to memory all that had passed in the hut; they saw nothing but what was natural and innocent, nothing of which any body had any room to complain, nothing at

which Heaven could be incensed. 'Yet that is all,' said the shepherd; 'where then is the crime? We are cousins, so much the worse; but if that does not hinder our loving, why ought it to hinder our marrying? Am I on that account less the father of my child? and you less its mother? Mark me, Annete! let them talk on: you depend on nobody; I am my own master: let us dispose of ourselves: every one does what he pleases with his own property. We shall have a child; so much the better. If it be a daughter, she will be genteel and amiable, like yourself; if it be a boy, he will be alert and joyous, like his father. It will be a treasure to us both. We will try who can love him best; and say what they will, he will know his father and mother by the tender care we shall take of him.' It was in vain that Lubin talked sense and reason; Annete was not at ease, and her uneasiness redoubled every day. She did not comprehend the discourse of the bailiff, and this very obscurity rendered his reproaches and menaces more terrible.

Lubin, who saw her consuming herself with sorrow, said to her one morning, 'My dear Annete, your grief will kill me; return to yourself, I beseech you. I have this night thought of an expedient which may relieve us. The parson told me, that if we were rich, the evil would be but half so great, and that by means of a good deal of money cousins drew themselves out of trouble: let us go and find out the lord of the manor: he is rich, and not proud: he is a father to us all: with him a shepherd is a man; and I have heard it said in the village, that he likes that they should get children. We will relate our adventure to him, and beg him to assist us in repairing the evil, if there be any.'— 'What would you dare?' said the shepherdess.... 'Why not?' replied Lubin: 'my lord is goodness itself, and we should be the first unfortunate creatures whom he would have left without succour.'

Behold then Annete and Lubin directing their

way towards the castle. They ask to speak with his lordship, and are permitted to appear. Annete, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her hands placed one in another over her round little waist, makes a modest curtsy. Lubin makes a leg and pulls off his hat, with the simple grace of nature. 'My lord,' said he, 'here is Annete big with child, saving your presence, and it is I alone who have done her that injury. Our judge says that we ought to be married, in order to get children; I desire him to marry us. He says that is impossible, because we are cousins; but I think the thing may be done, seeing that Annete is big with child, and that it is not more difficult to be a husband than a father. The bailiff sends us to the devil, and we recommend ourselves to you.' The good man had much ado to withhold laughing at Lubin's harangue. 'Children,' says he, 'the bailiff's right. But take courage, and tell me how the affair has happened.' Annete, who had not thought Lubin's manner sufficiently touching (for nature teaches women the art of softening and gaining upon men, and Cicero is but a novice to a young female petitioner), Annete then spoke: 'Alas! my lord,' said she, 'nothing is more plain or more natural than all that has happened to us. Lubin and I from our infancy kept sheep together: we caressed one another while infants; and when we see one another continually, we grow up without perceiving it. Our parents are dead; we were alone in the world. If we love not one another, said I, who will love us? Lubin said the same. Leisure, curiosity, and I know not what besides, made us try every method of testifying that we loved one another; and you see what has befallen us. If I have done ill, I shall die with sorrow. All that I desire is, to bring my child into the world, in order to console him when I shall be no more.'—'Ah, my lord,' said Lubin, bursting into tears, prevent Annete from dying. I should die too, and that

would be a pity. If you knew how we lived together! you should have seen us before this old bailiff struck terror into our souls: it was then who should be gayest. See now how pale and sorrowful she is, she whose complexion could have defied all the flowers of the spring. What disheartens her most is, that they threaten her that her child will reproach her with its birth.' At these last words Annete was not able to contain her sobs. 'He will come, then,' said she, 'to reproach me in my grave. I only ask of Heaven to live long enough to give him suck: and may I die the instant he has no need of his mother.' At these words she covered her face with her apron, to hide the tears which overflowed it.

The wise and virtuous mortal, whose succour they implored, had too much sensibility not to be touched with this affecting scene. 'Go, children,' said he: 'your innocence and love are equally respectable. If you were rich you would obtain the permission of loving one another, and of being united. It is not just that your misfortune should be deemed a crime.' He disdained not to write to Rome in their favour, and Benedict XIV. consented with pleasure that these lovers should be made man and wife.

THE SAMNITE MARRIAGES.

AN ANCIENT ANECDOTE.

Let every legislator, who would assure himself of the hearts of men, begin by ranging the women on the side of the laws and manners; let him put virtue and glory under the guard of beauty, under the tutelage of love: without this agreement he is sure of nothing.

Such was the policy of the Samnites, that warlike republic which made Rome pass under the yoke, and was a long time her rival. What made a Samnite a warrior, a patriot, a man virtuous against every trial, was the care they took to attach to all these qualities the most valuable prize of love.

The ceremony of their marriages was celebrated every year in a wide place, destined for military exercises. All the youth who were of a sufficient age to give citizens to the republic, assembled on a solemn day. There the young men chose their wives, according to the rank which their virtues and their exploits had given them in the annals of their country. We may easily conceive what a triumph this must be to those women who had the glory of being chosen by the conquerors, and how pride and love, those two springs of the human passions, gave force to virtues, on which all their success depended. They expected every year the ceremony of their marriages with a timid impatience: till then the young men and maidens of the Samnites never saw one another but in the temple, under the eyes of their mothers and prudent old men, with a modesty equally inviolable to both

sexes. Indeed this austere confinement was no restraint to the desires: the eyes and heart made a choice; but it was to the children a religious and sacred duty to confide their inclination to the authors of their days; a secret of this sort divulged was the shame of a family. This intimate communication of the dearest sentiments of their soul, this tender disclosure, which it was not permitted them to give to their desires, their regrets, their fears, but in the respectable bosom of nature, rendered a father and mother the friends, the consolers, the support of their children. The glory of some, the happiness of others, connected all the members of a family by the warmest interests of the human heart; and this society of pleasure and pain, cemented by habitude, and consecrated by duty, lasted till the grave. If the event did not answer their desires, an inclination which had not manifested itself abandoned its object so much the easier, as it would have been in vain to have pursued it with obstinacy; and there was a necessity for its giving place to the object of a new choice: for marriage was an act of duty in a citizen. The legislator had wisely considered, that he who would not take a wife himself, depended in some measure on the wives of others; and in making a crime of adultery, he had made a duty of marriage. There was a necessity therefore of presenting themselves to the assembly as soon as they had attained the age pointed out by the laws, and of making a choice according to their rank, though it were not also according to their desires.

Among a warlike people, beauty, even in the weaker sex, has something fierce and noble, which savours of their manners. The chase was the most familjar amusement of the Samnite maidens; their skill in drawing the bow, their nimbleness in the race, are talents unknown among us. These exercises gave their persons a wonderful ease, and their action a freedom full of graces. Unarmed,

modesty was painted on their countenances; as soon as they had fastened on their quivers, their head was erected with a warlike assurance, and courage sparkled in their eyes. The beauty of the men had a majestic and serious character; and the image of battles, for ever present to their imaginations, gave to their looks a grave, commanding, and savage boldness. Amidst this warlike youth was distinguished, by the delicacy of his features, his sensible and tender air, the son of the brave Telespon, one of the old Samnites who had fought best for liberty. This old man in resigning up his arms to the hands of his son, had said to him, 'My son, I hear sometimes the old men, with an ill-natured raillery, telling me that I ought to clothe you like a woman, and that you would have made a pretty huntress. These railleries afflict your father; but he consoles himself in the hope that nature has at least made no mistake in the heart which she has given you.'—'Take courage, my father,' replied the young man, piqued with emulation; 'these old men will perhaps be glad one day that their children follow my example: let them take me for a girl here, the Romans shall not be mistaken in me.' Agatis kept his word with his father, and displayed in his first campaigns an intrepidity, an ardour which changed their railleries into encomiums. His companions said one to another with astonishment, 'Who would have thought this effeminate body was filled with so manly a courage? Cold, hunger, fatigue, nothing daunts him: with his touching and modest air he braves death full as well as we.'

One day, in presence of the enemy, Agatis seeing with composure a shower of arrows falling around him; 'You who are so handsome, how are you so brave?' said one of his companions, who was remarkable for his ugliness. At these words the signal for the attack was given. 'And you, who are so ugly,' replied Agatis, 'will you now see

which of us two shall carry off the standard of the battalion we are going to charge?' He said: both of them spring forward, and, in the midst of the carnage, Agatis appears with the standard in his hand.

However, he now approached the age wherein he was to enter himself in the number of married persons, and, in the quality of father, to obtain that of citizen. The young damsels, who heard of his valour with esteem, and saw his beauty with a soft emotion, envied each other his looks. One alone at last attracted them, the beautiful Cephalis.

In her were assembled in the highest degree that modesty and boldness, those noble and touching graces, which characterised the Samnite beauties. The laws, as I have said, had not forbid the eyes to speak; and the eyes of love are very eloquent, when it has no other language. If you have sometimes seen lovers constrained by the presence of a severe witness, do not you admire with what rapidity the whole soul unfolds itself in the lightning of one fugitive glance? A look of Agatis declared his trouble, his fears, his hope, and the emulation of virtue and glory with which love had just inflamed his heart. Cephalis seemed to forbid her eyes to meet those of Agatis; but her eyes were sometimes a little slow in obeying her, and were not cast downwards till after they had been answered. One day especially, and it was that which decided the triumph of her lover, one day her looks being fixed upon him, after remaining for some time immoveable, were turned up towards heaven with the most tender expression. 'Ah, I understand that wish,' said the young man in himself: 'I understand it, and I will accomplish it. Charming maiden, have I flattered myself too much? Did not your eyes, raised up to heaven, beseech it to render me deserving of choosing you? Well, heaven has listened to you; I feel it by the emotions of my soul. But, alas! all my rivals (and I shall have rivals without

number) will dispute with me this honour: a brilliant action depends upon circumstances; should any one happier than I attain it, he has the honour of the first choice; and the first choice, beautiful Cephalis, cannot but fall upon you.'

These ideas engaged his attention without remission: they engaged also the attention of his mistress. 'If Agatis had to choose,' said she, 'he would fix upon me; I dare believe it: I have observed him well, I have thoroughly read his soul. Whether he presents himself to my companions, or whether he speaks to them, he has not with them that complaisance, that sweet earnestness, which he betrays on seeing me. I perceive also that his voice, naturally soft and tender, has something still more sensible when he speaks to me. His eyes especially... Oh! his eyes have said to me what they say to no one else; and would it had pleased the gods that he were the only one who distinguished me from the crowd! Yes, my dear Agatis! it would be a misfortune to seem handsome to any other than thee. What comparison between him and those youths who terrify me while they seek me out with their eyes? Their murderous air frightens me. Agatis is valiant, but has nothing ferocious in him; even under arms, we see in him I know not what that is moving. He will perform prodigies of valour, I am sure; but, after all, if fortune betrays love, and if some other has the advantage... that thought chills me with terror.'

Cephalis dissembled not her fears to her mother. 'Put up vows,' said she to her, 'put up vows for Agatis's glory: you will put them up for the happiness of your daughter. I think, I am sure he loves me; and can I not adore him? You know that he has the esteem of our elders; he is the idol of all my companions: I see their confusion, their blushes, their emotion at his approach: one word from his mouth fills them with pride.'—'Very well,' said her mother, smiling; 'if he loves you, he will

choose you.'—' He would choose me, without doubt, if he had the right of choosing: but, my mother . . .' —' But, my daughter, he will have his turn.'—' His turn, alas! it will be a pretty time,' replied Cephalis, fixing her eyes on the ground. ' How, my daughter! Methinks to hear you,—the word is, who shall have you! You flatter yourself a little.' —' I do not flatter myself; I tremble; happy if I had known to please only him whom I shall always love!'

Agatis, on his side, the evening of the day on which he took the field, said to his father, embracing him, ' Adieu, dear author of my life: either you see me for the last time, or you shall see me again the most glorious of all the sons of the Samnites.'—' Well said, my boy: thus it is that a well-born son ought to take leave of his father. In reality, I see thee animated with an ardour that astonishes even myself: what propitious deities inspire thee?'—' What deities, my father? Nature and Love, the desire of imitating you, and of meriting Cephalis.'—' Oh! I understand; love is concerned in it: there is no harm in that. Come, tell me a little: I think I have sometimes distinguished your Cephalis among her companions.'—' Yes, my father, she is easily distinguished.'—' But do you know that she is very beautiful?'—' Beautiful! beautiful as glory!'—' I think I see her,' continued the old man, who took a delight in animating him: ' I see in her the figure of a nymph.'—' Ah, my father!' cried Agatis, ' you do a great deal of honour to the nymphs.'—' An elegant gait?'—' And still more noble.'—' A fresh complexion?'—' The rose itself.'—' Long tresses braided with grace!'—' And her eyes, my father, her eyes! Oh! that you had seen them, when lifted up to heaven after being fixed on me, they prayed for victory.'—' You are right, she is all charming; but you will have rivals.' —' Rivals! I have undoubtedly a thousand.'—' They will carry her off from you.'—' They will

carry her off from me!'—'To tell you the truth, I am afraid of it; these Samnites are very brave young fellows!'—'Oh! let them be as brave as you please; that is not what disturbs me. Let them but give me an opportunity of meriting Cephalis, you shall hear of me.' Telespon, who till then had taken a delight in stimulating him, could no longer contain his tears. 'Ah! the rare present that heaven makes us,' said he, embracing him, 'when he gives us a sensible heart! It is the principle of all the virtues. My dear child, you overwhelm me with joy. There remains still in my veins sufficient to make one campaign; and you promise me such fine things, that I will make this along with you.'

The day of departure, according to custom, the whole army filed off before the young maidens, who were ranged on the spot to animate the warriors. The good old Telespon marched by his son's side. 'Ah, ah!' said the other old men, 'see Telespon is grown young again: where is he going then at his age?'—'To a wedding,' replied the good man, 'to a wedding.' Agatis made him remark Cephalis from afar, who towered above her companions with a grace perfectly celestial. His father, who had his eyes upon him, perceived, that, in passing before her, that sweet and serene countenance was inflamed with a martial ardour, and became terrible as the countenance of Mars. 'Courage, my son,' said he to him; 'indulge thy passion; it becomes thee well.'

Part of the campaign passed between the Samnites and the Romans in observing each other, without coming to any decisive action. The strength of the two states consisted in their armies, and the generals on both sides acted like able officers. However the young Samnites, who were to marry, burned with impatience of coming to blows.'—'I have done nothing yet,' said one, 'worthy to be inscribed in the annals of the republic; I shall have

the shame of hearing myself named without any eulogy to distinguish me.'—'What pity,' said another, 'that they vouchsafe not to offer us an opportunity of signalizing ourselves! I should have done wonders this campaign.'—'Our general,' said the greater part, 'will dishonour us in the eyes of our elders and wives. If he leads us back without fighting, they will have room to think that he mistrusted our valour.'

But the sage warrior, who was at their head, heard them unmoved. From his slowness and delays he promised himself two advantages: one was to persuade the enemy that he was weak or fearful, and to engage him, in this confidence, to an imprudent attack; the other, to suffer the impatience of his warriors to increase, and to carry their ardour to excess before he risked a battle. Both these stratagems succeeded. The Roman general, haranguing his troops, pointed out to them the Samnites wavering, and ready to fly before them. 'The genius of Rome triumphs,' said he to them; 'that of our enemies trembles, and is not able to sustain our approach. Come on, brave Romans; if we have not the advantage of ground, that of valour makes it up to us: it is ours; let us march.'—'There they are,' said the Samnite general to his impatient youth; 'let us suffer them to approach within bow-shot, and you shall then have all the liberty imaginable to deserve your wives.'

The Romans advance; the Samnites wait them with firmness. 'Let us fall upon them,' said the Roman general; 'a still body cannot sustain the impetuosity of that which runs upon them.' On a sudden the Samnites themselves spring forward, with the rapidity of coursers when the barrier is opened to them. The Romans halt; they receive the shock without being broken or disordered; and the skilfulness of their chief changes on a sudden the attack to a defence. They fought a long time with incredible obstinacy: to conceive it, we must

picture to ourselves men who had no other passions than love, nature, country, liberty, glory, defending in those decisive moments, all those interests at once. In one of the redoubted attacks of the Samnites, old Telespon was dangerously wounded, as he fought by the side of his son. The youth, full of love for his father, seeing the Romans giving way in all parts, and thinking the battle won, pursued the invincible movement of nature, and drawing his father out of the tumult, helped him to drag himself to some distance from the place of combat. There, at the foot of a tree, he dressed, with tears, the deep wound of the venerable old man. While he was drawing the dart out of it, he heard near him the noise of a troop of Samnites, who had been repulsed. 'Whither are you going, my friends?' said he to them, quitting his father: 'You fly! this is your way;' and perceiving the left wing of the Romans uncovered, 'Come on,' said he; 'let us attack their flank: they are vanquished, if you but follow me.' This rapid evolution struck terror into that wing of the Roman army; and Agatis, seeing them put to the rout, 'Pursue,' said he; 'my friends; the road is open: I quit you for a moment, to go and assist my father.' Victory at last decided for the Samnites, and the Romans, too much enfeebled by their losses, were obliged to retire within their walls.

Telespon had fainted away through pain. The cares of his son reanimated him. 'Are they beaten?' demanded the old man. 'They are putting the finishing stroke to it,' said the young one: 'things are in a good posture.'—'If so,' said the old man, smiling, 'endeavour to recal me to life: it is sweet to conquerors; and I would see thee married. The good man, for a long time, had not strength to say more; for the blood which had flowed from his wound had reduced him to extremity.

The Samnites, after their victory, busied them-

selves the whole night in succouring the wounded: they spared no pains to save the worthy father of Agatis; and he recovered, though with some difficulty, of his weakness.

The return from the campaign was the time of their marriages, for two reasons: one, that the reward of services done their country might follow them close, and that the example might thence have more force: the other, that during the winter the young husbands might have time to give life to new citizens before they went to expose their own. As the deeds of this glowing youth had been more brilliant than ever, they thought proper to give more pomp and splendour to the feast, which was to be their triumph.

There were few maidens in the state who had not, like Cephalis, some communication of sentiments and desires with some one of the young men; and each of them put up vows for him whose choice she hoped to fix, if he should have it in his power to choose.

The place in which they were to assemble was a vast amphitheatre, entered by triumphal arches, on which were seen hung up the spoils of the Romans. The young warriors were to repair there armed at all points; the young maidens with their bow and quiver, and as well clad as the simplicity of a state, in which luxury was unknown, permitted. 'Come, daughters,' said the mothers, eager to adorn them, 'you must present yourselves at this august feast with all the charms that heaven has been pleased to grant you. The glory of men is to conquer, that of women to please. Happy those who shall merit the wishes of these young and valiant citizens, who are now going to be adjudged the most worthy of giving defenders to the state! the palm of merit will shelter their habitation, the public esteem will surround it. Their children will be the elder sons of their country, and its most precious hope.' While they spoke thus, these tender mothers inter-

weaved with vine-leaves and myrtle the beautiful tresses of these young virgins, and gave to the foldings of their veil that air and turn which was most favourable to the character of their beauty. From the knots of the girdle beneath the bosom, they created waves of the most elegant drapery; fixed the quiver on their shoulders; instructed them to present themselves with grace, leaning on the bow; and threw back their light robe negligently, above one of their knees, in order to give their gait more ease and majesty. This industry of the Samnite mothers was an act of piety; and gallantry itself, employed in the triumph of virtue, assumed the sacred character of it. The maidens, admiring themselves in the crystal of the pure wave, never thought themselves sufficiently handsome; each of them exaggerated the advantages of her rivals, and dared no longer reckon upon her own.

But of all the wishes formed in that great day, there were none more ardent than those of the beautiful Cephalis. 'May the gods grant us our prayers,' said her mother to her, embracing her; 'but, my daughter, wait their will with the submission of a humble heart; if they have given you some charms, they know what value to set upon them. It is for you to crown their gifts with the graces of modesty. Without modesty, beauty may dazzle, but will never touch the heart. It is by this that it inspires a tender veneration, and obtains a kind of worship. Let this amiable modesty serve as a veil to desires, which, perhaps, may become extinct before the day closes, and give place to a new inclination.' Cephalis was not able to bear this idea without letting fall some tears. 'These tears,' said her mother to her, 'are unworthy a Samnite maiden. Learn that of all the young warriors now about to assemble, there is not one but has lavished his blood for our defence and our liberty; that there is not one of them but merits you, and towards whom you ought to be

proud of paying the debt due from your country... Think of that, dry up your tears, and follow me.'

On his side, the good old Telespon conducted his son to the assembly. 'Well,' said he, 'how goes the heart? I have been sufficiently pleased with you this campaign, and I hope they will speak well of it.'—'Alas!' said the tender and modest Agatis, 'I had but a moment for myself. I should perhaps have done something, but you were wounded: I owed all my attention to you. I do not reproach myself for having sacrificed my glory to you: I should be inconsolable for having betrayed my country; but I should have been no less so for having abandoned my father. Thank heaven, my duties were not incompatible; the rest is in the hand of the gods.'—'How religious we are when we are afraid!' said the old man, smiling: 'confess that you were more resolute, when you went out to charge the Romans; but take courage, all will go well: I promise you a handsome wife.'

They repair to the assembly, where several generations of citizens, ranged in amphitheatre, formed a most awful sight. The circuit rounded off into an oval. On one side were seen the daughters at the feet of their mothers; on the other side, the fathers ranged above their sons: at one end sat the counsel of old men; at the other the youth not yet marriageable, placed according to the degrees of their age. The new-married pairs of the preceding years crowned the circle. Respect, modesty, and silence, reigned throughout. This silence was suddenly interrupted by the noise of warlike instruments, and the Samnite general was seen to enter, environed with heroes who commanded under him. His presence made all the assembly look down. He traverses the circuit, and goes to place himself with his retinue in the midst of the sages.

The annals of the republic are opened, and a herald reads with a loud voice, according to the order of time, the testimony which the magistrates

nd generals had paid to the behaviour of the young warriors. He, who by any cowardice or baseness had set a blot upon his name, was condemned by the laws to the infamous punishment of ...libacy, till he had redeemed his honour by some brave action: but nothing was more rare than such examples. A plain honesty, an irreproachable bravery, was the least praise that could be given a young Samnite; and it was a kind of shame to have done only one's duty. The greater part amongst them had given proofs of a courage, a virtue, which every where else would be deemed heroic, but which in the manners of that people were hardly to be distinguished, so familiar were they. Some of them raised themselves above their rivals by actions that were striking; but the judgment of the spectators became more severe in proportion as they received the report of virtues still more worthy of commendation, and those which had at first struck them were effaced by greater strokes. The first campaigns of Agatis were of this number; but when they came to the recital of the last battle, and it was related how he had abandoned his father to rally his companions, and lead them back to the fight, this sacrifice of nature to his country carried all their suffrages: the tears ran from the eyes of the old men; those who surrounded Telespon embraced him with joy; those at a greater distance congratulated him by gesture and look: the good man smiled, and burst into tears: the very rivals of his son viewed him with respect, and the mothers, pressing their daughters in their arms, wished them Agatis for their husband. Cephalis, pale and trembling, dares not lift up her eyes; her heart, filled with joy and fear, had suspended its motion: her mother, who supported her on her knees, dares not speak to her for fear of betraying her, and thinks she sees all eyes fixed upon her.

As soon as the murmur of the universal applause

was appeased, the herald names Parmeno, and relates, that in the last battle, the courser of the Samnite general being thrown down under him, transfixed by a deadly shaft, and the hero in his fall being for a moment defenceless, a Roman soldier was on the point of piercing him with his javelin; when Parmeno, to save the chief's life, had exposed his own, by throwing himself before the blow, from which he had received a deep wound. 'It is certain,' said the general, addressing himself to the assembly, 'that this brave citizen made a buckler for me with his body; and if my life be of service to my country, it is a gift of Parmeno's.' At these words the assembly less moved, but not less astonished at Parmeno's courage than that of Agatis, bestowed upon him the same eulogies; and the suffrages and good wishes were now divided between those two rivals: the herald, by order of the elders, commands silence, and those venerable judges get up to deliberate. Their opinions are opposed to each other for a long time with equal advantage. Some of them pretended that Agatis ought not to have quitted his post to assist his father, and that he had done nothing but repair this fault by abandoning his father to rally his companions; but this unnatural sentiment was espoused by very few. The most aged of the elders then spoke and said, 'Is it not virtue that we are to recompense? The point then is only to know which of these two emotions is the most virtuous; to abandon a dying father, or to expose one's own life. Our young warriors have both of them performed an action decisive with respect to the victory: it is for you, virtuous citizens, to judge which of the two it must have cost most. Of two examples equally serviceable, the most painful is that which must be most encouraged.'

Will it be believed of the manners of this people? It was decided with one voice, that it was braver to tear one's-self from the arms of a dying father,

whom we could succour, than to expose one's-self to death, even though it were inevitable; and all the suffrages concurred in decreeing to Agatis the honour of the first choice. But the contest about to arise will appear still less probable. Their deliberations were carried on aloud; and Agatis had heard that the principle of generosity alone made the balance incline in his favour. There arose in his soul a reproach which made him ashamed; 'No,' said he in himself, 'it is a surprise; I ought not to make an ill use of it.' He asks leave to speak; they attend in silence: 'A triumph which I have not merited,' said he, 'would be the torment of my life; and in the arms of my virtuous spouse, my happiness would be embittered by the crime of having obtained her unjustly. You think you crown in me the person who has done most for his country; ye wise Samnites, I must confess, that what I did was not entirely done for that alone. I love, I longed to merit what I love; and if there is any glory redounds to me from a conduct which you vouchsafe to commend, love divides it with virtue. Let my rival judge himself, and let him receive the prize which I yield to him, if he has been more generous than I.' How is it possible to express the emotion which this confession caused in all hearts? On one side it tarnished the lustre of the actions of this young man; and on the other it gave to the character of his virtue something more heroic, more surprising, more uncommon, than the most noble devotion of life. This stroke of frankness and candour produced, with regard to these young rivals, two very opposite effects. Some, admiring them with an undisguised joy, seemed to testify, by a noble assurance, that this example raised them above themselves: others, lost and confused, appeared to be overwhelmed, as by a weight above their strength. The matrons and virgins, in their hearts, unanimously gave the

prize of virtue to him who had the magnanimity to declare that he was not worthy of it; and the elders had their eyes fixed on Parmeno, who, with a composed countenance, waited till they should deign to hear him. 'I know not,' said he at last, addressing himself to Agatis, 'I know not to what degree the actions of men ought to be disinterested, in order to be virtuous. There is nothing, strictly speaking, but is done for our own satisfaction; but what I should not have done for mine, is the confession I have just heard; and even supposing that there may have been hitherto something more brave in my conduct than in yours, which is a point yet undecided, the severity with which you have just now judged yourself, raises you above me.'

Here the elders, confounded, knew not which side to take: they had not even recourse to voices, in order to determine to whom to give the prize. It was decided by acclamation, that both of them merited it, and the honour of the second choice was now unworthy either of one or the other. The most aged of the judges spoke again: 'Why delay, said he, 'by our irresolutions, the happiness of our young people? Their choice is made in the bottom of their hearts; let them be permitted to communicate one to the other the secret of their desires: if the object of them be different, each without precedency, will obtain the wife he loves: if it happen that they are rivals, the law of chance shall decide it; and there is no Samnite maiden but may glory in consoling the less successful of these two warriors.' Thus spoke the venerable Androgeus, and all the assembly applauded.

They cause Agatis and Parmeno to advance to the middle of the circus. They begin by embracing each other, and all eyes are bedewed with tears. Trembling each, they hesitate: they are afraid to name the wife of their desires: neither of them thinks it possible that the other can have

made a choice different from his own. 'I love,' said Parmeno, 'the most accomplished of heaven's works; grace and beauty itself.'—'Alas!' replied Agatis, 'you love her whom I adore: it is naming her to paint her thus: the nobleness of her features, the gentle fire of her looks, I know not what of divinity in her shape and gait, sufficiently distinguish her from the crowd of Samnite maidens. How unhappy will one of us be,' reduced to another choice!'—'You say true,' replied Parmeno; 'there is no happiness without Eliana.'—'Eliana, say you? What!' cried Agatis, 'is it the daughter of the wise Androgeus, Eliana, whom you love?'—'And who, then, should I love?' said Parmeno, astonished at the joy of his rival. 'Eliana! not Cephalis!' resumed Agatis with transport. 'Ah! if so, we are happy: embrace me; you restore me to life.' By their embraces it was easy to judge that they were reconciled about their love. The elders ordered them to draw near, and, if their choice was not the same, to declare it aloud. At the names of Eliana and Cephalis, the whole amphitheatre resounded with shouts of applause. Androgeus and Telespon, the brave Eumenes, father of Cephalis, Parmeno's father, Melante, felicitated each other with that melting tenderness which mingles in the joy of old men. 'My friends,' said Telespon, 'we have brave children there: with what ardour are they going to beget others! When I think of it, I imagine myself to be still in the flower of my age. Paternal weakness apart, the day of marriage is a festival to me: I think it is I who marry all the virgins of the commonwealth.' While he spoke thus, the good man leaped with joy; and as he was a widower, they advised him to put himself again into the ranks. 'No raillery,' said he; 'if I were always as young, I might yet do something to speak of.'

They repaired to the temple, to consecrate at

the foot of the altar the ceremony of the marriages. Parmeno and Agatis were conducted together in triumph: and there was ordered a solemn sacrifice, to return thanks to the gods for having given to the republic two such virtuous citizens.

THE GOOD HUSBAND.

FELISONDE, one of those good fathers of a family who recal the golden age to our minds, had married his only daughter, Hortensia, to the Baron de Valsain, and his niece, Amelia, to the President de Lusane.

Valsain, gallant without assiduity, sufficiently tender without jealousy, too much taken up about his own glory and advancement to make himself the guardian of his wife, had left her upon the strength of her own virtue, to deliver herself up to the dissipations of a world, in which being launched himself, he took a delight in seeing her shine. Lusane, more retired, more assiduous, breathed only for Amelia, who, on her side, lived but for him. The mutual care of pleasing was their constant employment, and to them the most sacred of duties was the sweetest of pleasures.

Old Felisonde was enjoying the union of his family, when the deaths of Amelia and Valsain diffused sorrow and mourning over it. Lusane in his grief had not even the consolation of being a father: Valsain left Hortensia two children, with very little support to them. The first sorrows of the young widow were only her husband: but we forget ourselves in vain; we return thither insensibly. The time of mourning was that of reflection.

At Paris, a young woman, resigned to dissipation, is exempt from censure as long as she is in the power of a husband: they suppose that the person most interested ought to be the most rigid, and what he approves they dare not blame: but, delivered up to herself, she falls again under the tutelage of a severe and jealous public, and it is not at twenty-two that widowhood is a free state. Hortensia then

saw clearly that she was too young to depend only on herself, and Felisonde saw it still clearer. One day this good father communicated his fears to his nephew Lusane. 'My friend,' said he, 'you are much to be pitied, but I am still more so. I have but one daughter; you know how I love her, and you see the dangers that she runs. The world, which has seduced her, invites her back again; her mourning over, she will resign herself to it: and I am afraid, old as I am, I may live long enough to have occasion to be ashamed. My daughter has a fund of virtue: but our virtue is within ourselves, and our honour, that honour so dear, is placed in the opinion of others.'—'I understand you, sir; and to say the truth, I share your uneasiness. But can we not engage Hortensia to a new match?'—'Ha, my friend! what reasons she has to oppose me! two children, two children without fortune; for you know that I am not rich, and that their father was ruined.'—'No matter, sir; consult Hortensia: I know a man, if it should be agreeable to her, who thinks justly enough, who has a heart good enough to serve as a father to her children.' The good old man thought he understood him. 'O you,' said he to him, 'who formed the happiness of my niece Amelia, you whom I love as my own son; Lusane! Heaven reads in my heart..... But tell me, does the husband whom you propose know my daughter? Is not he afraid of her youth, her levity, the flight she has taken in the world?'—'He knows her as well as you do, and he esteems her no less.' Felisonde delayed not to speak to his daughter. 'Yes, my father, I agree,' said she, 'that my situation is delicate. To be observant of one's-self, to be afraid of one's-self without ceasing, to be in the world as before one's judge, is the lot of a widow at my age: it is painful and dangerous.'—'Well, then, daughter, Lusane has talked to me of a husband who would suit you.'—'Lusane, my father! Ah, if it be possible, let him give me one

like himself. Happy as I was myself with Valsain, I could not help envying sometimes the lot of his wife.' The father, transported with her answer, went to give an account of it to his nephew. 'If you do not flatter me,' said Lusane, 'to-morrow we shall all be happy.'—'What, my friend, is it you?'—'I myself.'—'Alas! my heart had told me so.'—'Yes, it is I, sir, who would console your old age, by bringing back to her duty a daughter worthy of you. Without giving into indecent extravagancies, I see that Hortensia has assumed all the airs, all the follies of a woman of fashion. Vivacity, caprice, the desire of pleasing and of amusements, have engaged her in the labyrinth of a noisy and frivolous acquaintance: the point is to withdraw her from it. To do that, I have occasion for a little courage and resolution: I shall have tears, perhaps, to contend with, and that is much for a heart so sensible as mine; nevertheless I can answer for myself. But you, sir, you are a father: and if Hortensia should come to complain to you . . .'—'Fear nothing; dispose of my daughter: I confide her to thy virtue; and if the authority of a husband be not enough, I resign to you that of a father.'

Lusane was received by Hortensia with the most touching graces: 'Think you see in me,' said she to him, 'the wife that you have lost; if I take her place in your heart, I have nothing to regret.'

When they came to draw up the articles, 'Sir,' said Lusane to Felisonde, 'let us not forget that we have two orphans. Their father's estate has not permitted him to leave them a large inheritance; let us not deprive them of their mother's, nor let the birth of my children be a misfortune to them.' The old man was moved even to weeping with the generosity of his nephew, whom he called from that moment his son. Hortensia was not less sensible to the proceedings of her new husband. The most elegant equipage, the richest clothes, the most

precious trinkets, a house in which every thing breathed taste, elegance, wealth, proclaimed to this young lady a husband attentive to all her pleasures. But the joy she felt was not of long duration.

As soon as a calm had succeeded to the tumult of the wedding, Lusane thought it his duty to come to an explanation with her on the plan of life which he wanted to trace out to her. He took for this serious discourse the peaceful moment of her waking; the moment in which the silence of the senses leaves the reason its perfect freedom, wherein the soul herself, lulled by the trance of sleep, seems to revive with pure ideas, and being wholly mistress of herself, contemplates herself, and reads in her own bosom, as we see to the bottom of a clear and smooth water.

'My dear Hortensia,' said he to her, 'I want you to be happy, and to be always so. But it will cost you some slight sacrifices, and I had much rather ask them plainly of you, than engage you to them by indirect methods, which would show distrust.

'You have passed with the Baron de Valsain some agreeable years. Made for the world and for pleasures, young, brilliant, and dissipated himself, he inspired you with all his tastes. My character is more serious, my condition more modest, my temper a little more severe: it is not possible for me to assume his manners, and I believe it is the better for you. The path you have yet followed is strewed with flowers and snares; that which we are going to pursue has fewer attractions and fewer dangers. The charm which surrounded you would have been dissipated with youth; the serene days I prepare for you will be the same in all seasons. It is not in the midst of the world that an honest woman finds happiness; it is in the midst of her own family, in the love of her duties, the care of her children, and the intimate commerce of a worthy set of acquaintance.'

This preamble gave Hortensia some surprise; above all, the word *family* startled her ear: but assuming a tone of raillery, 'I shall become, perhaps, some day or other,' said she, 'an excellent manager of a family; at present I know nothing of it. My duty is to love you, I fulfil it; my children do not yet want me: as to my acquaintance, you know that I see none but genteel people.'—'Let us not confound, my dear, genteel people with good people.'—'I understand your distinction; but in point of acquaintances we ought not to be so difficult. The world, such as it is, amuses me; and the way of living in it has nothing incompatible with the decency of your condition: it is not I who wear the robe; and I do not see why Madam Lusane should be more obliged to be a mope than Madam de Valsain. Be, then, my dear President, as grave as you please; but do not take it amiss that your wife be giddy a few years longer: every age will bring its likings along with it.'—'It is pity,' replied Lusane, 'to bring you back to seriousness, for you are a charming trifler. There is a necessity, however, for talking reason to you. In the world do you love without distinction every thing that composes it?'—'Not separately; but the medley pleases me well enough all together.'—'What of the dealers in scandal, for instance?'—'The scandal-mongers have their charms.'—'They give a ridiculous turn to the plainest things, a criminal air to the most innocent; and publish, with exaggeration, the foibles or irregularities of those whom they have just flattered.'—'It is true, that at the first glance we are frightened at these characters, but at bottom they are very little dangerous: from the moment that we rail at all the world, railing does no harm: it is a species of contagion which weakens in proportion as it extends itself.'—'And those fops, whose very looks are an insult to a virtuous woman, and whose conversation dishonours her,

what say you to them?'—'One never believes them.'—'I would not imitate them in speaking ill of your sex: there are many valuable women, I know, but there are . . .!'—'Just as it is amongst you, a mixture of virtues and vices.'—'Very well; and what prevents our making a choice in this mixture?'—'We *do* make one for intimacy, but in the world we live with the world.'—'But I, my dear, I would live only with people, who by their manners and character are deserving to be my friends.'—'Your friends, sir, your friends! and how many of them have we in life?'—'A great many, when we are worthy, and know how to cultivate them. I speak not of that generous friendship, the devotion of which proceeds almost to heroism; I call those friends who come to me with the desire of finding joy and peace, disposed to pardon my foibles, to conceal them from the eyes of the public, to treat me when present with frankness, when absent with tenderness. Such friends are not so rare, and I presume to hope that I shall have such.'—'With all my heart; we will introduce our several acquaintance to each other.'—'I will not have two sets of acquaintance.'—'What, sir, will not your door be open?'—'Open to my friends, always; to every comer, never, I give you my word.'—'No, sir, I will not suffer you to revolt against the public by odious distinctions. We may not love the world, but we ought to fear it, and not offend it.'—'Oh, be easy, my dear, that is my concern: they will say that I am a brute, jealous, perhaps; that signifies little to me.'—'It signifies to me. I would have my husband be respected, and not have cause to reproach me with having made him the town talk. Form your own company as you shall think proper, but leave me to cultivate my old acquaintance, and prevent the court and town from letting their tongues loose upon you.'

Lusane admired the address of a young woman

in defending her liberty. 'My dear Hortensia,' said he to her, 'it is not as a whim that I have taken my resolution: it is upon thorough consideration, you may believe me, and nothing in the world can change it. Choose, among the persons whom you see, such a number of decent women and prudent men as you shall think proper; my house shall be theirs: but that choice made, take leave of the rest. I will join my friends to yours: our two lists united shall be deposited with my porter for his constant rule; and if he deviates from it, he shall be discharged. This is the plan I propose to myself, and which I wanted to communicate to you.'

Hortensia remained confounded at seeing all her fine projects vanish in a moment. She could not believe that it was Lusane, that gentle and complaisant man, who had just been talking to her. 'After this,' said she, 'who can trust men? see the tone this man assumes! with what composure he dictates his will to me! To see only virtuous women, and accomplished men! a fine chimera! And then the amusing society which the circle of respectable friends must afford! '*Such is my plan*,' said he, as if there was nothing but to obey when he had said it. See how we spoil them! My cousin was a good little woman, who moped as much as he pleased. She was as happy as a queen the moment her husband deigned to smile upon her; and quite transported with one caress, she would come to me and boast of him as a divinity. He believes, without doubt, that according to her example I shall have nothing else to do but to please him: he is mistaken; and if he intends to put me in leading-strings, I will let him see that I am no longer a child.'

From that moment, to the joyous, free, and endearing manner which she had observed with Lusane, succeeded a cold and reserved air, which he saw plain enough, but took no notice of it to her.

she had not failed to make her marriage known to that swarm of slight acquaintance, who are called friends. They came in crowds to congratulate her, and Lusane could not decline returning with her those visits of ceremony; but he infused into his politeness such striking distinctions, that it was not difficult for Hortensia to discern those whom he wished to see again.

In this number was not included one Olympia, who, with a sovereign contempt for the opinion of the public, pretends that every thing which pleases is right, and joins the example to the precept; nor one Climene, who does not know why a woman should make any scruple to change her lovers when she is tired of the man she has taken, and thinks the timid precautions of secrecy too much beneath her quality. In this number were not included those smart toilette and scene hunters, who leading in Paris a life of idleness and inutility, *grubs in the morning, and butterflies in the evening**, pass one half of their time in having nothing to do, and the other half in doing nothing; nor those obliging gentry by profession, who having no personal existence in the world, attach themselves to a handsome woman to pass for one of her danglers, and who ruin her in order to support themselves.

Hortensia retired to her own apartment, uneasy and pensive. She thought she saw herself on the point of being deprived of every thing that makes life agreeable: vanity, a taste for pleasure, the

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* *Grubs in the morning, and butterflies in the evening.*]—*Chenilles le matin, et papillons le soir.* The humour of this passage, being in some degree local, cannot be entirely preserved in the translation. It is an allusion to dress, *En chenille* being at Paris a common cant phrase for a morning deshabille.

love of liberty, every thing revolted against the empire which her husband wanted to assume. However, having armed herself with resolution, she thought it her duty to dissemble for a time, the better to choose the moment of breaking out.

The next day Lusane asked her if she had made out her list. 'No, sir,' said she, 'I have not, and shall not make any.'—'Here is mine,' continued he, without any discomposure: 'see, if in the number of your friends and of mine I have forgot any one you like, and that is fit for us.'—'I have told you, sir, that I shall not meddle in your arrangements; and I beg of you, once for all, not to interfere in mine. If our acquaintance do not suit, let us do like all the rest of the world: let us divide them without constraining ourselves. Have those whom you like to dinner; I will have those whom I like to supper.'—'Ah, my dear Hortensia! what you propose to me is far from my principles! Do not think of it: never in my house shall such a custom take place. I will make it as agreeable as I can to you; but no distinction, if you please, between your friends and mine. This evening all whom this list contains are invited to sup with you; receive them well, I beseech you, and prepare yourself to live with them.' At these words he retired, leaving the list for Hortensia to peruse. 'There,' said she, 'his law is laid down!' And running it over, she was encouraging herself not to submit to it, when the Countess de Fierville, Valsain's aunt, came to see her, and found her with tears in her eyes. This haughty woman had taken Hortensia into her friendship, and as she flattered her inclinations, had gained her confidence. The young lady, whose heart stood in need of consolation, told her the cause of her chagrin. 'How! what,' cried the countess, 'after having had the folly to dispose of yourself so unsuitably, will you also be so weak as to degrade yourself? You a slave! and to whom? a man of the robe! Re-

member that you have had the honour to be Madam de Valsain.' Hortensia was now ashamed of having had the weakness to expose her husband. 'Though he might be in the wrong,' said she, 'that should not hinder me from respecting him: he is the honestest man in the world, and what he has done for my children.'—'An honest man! and who is not so? That is a merit to be met with in every street. And what has this honest man done so wonderful for your children? He has not robbed them of their fortune. To be sure it would have been worth while to have abused your father's weakness! No, madam, he has not acquired the right of talking so magisterially. Let him preside in his own court, but leave you to command at home.' At these words Lusane entered. 'In my house, madam, it is neither my wife nor I that commands, it is reason; and probably it is not you that she will choose for an arbitress.'—'No, sir,' replied the countess, with a commanding tone, 'it is not for you to make laws for this lady. You have heard me, and I am glad of it: you know my opinion of the absurdity of your proceedings.'—'Madam,' replied Lusane, 'if I were as wrong as you suppose me, I am not to be corrected by affronts. Gentleness and modesty are the arms of your sex, and Hortensia by herself is much more powerful than with your assistance. Leave our agreements to ourselves, since we are the persons who must live together. Though you should have rendered her duties odious to her, you could not have dispensed with her fulfilling them; though you should have made her lose the confidence and friendship of her husband, you could not have made her amends for them. Spare her that advice which she neither will nor ought to follow. To another they might have been dangerous; to her, thank Heaven, they are only useless. Hortensia,' added he, going, 'you have not desired to give me uneasiness, but let this serve

you as a lesson.'—'See, how you defend yourself!' said Madam de Fierville to Hortensia, who had not even dared to lift up her eyes. 'Obey, my dear, obey. It is the portion of weak souls. Good Heaven!' said she, going out, 'I am the gentlest, the most virtuous woman on the face of the earth; but if a husband had dared to treat me thus, I should have taken a handsome revenge of him.' Hortensia had scarce strength enough to get up to attend Madam de Fierville, so great was her terror and confusion. She perceived the advantage that her imprudence gave her husband; but far from availing himself of it, he did not even so much as reproach her with it, and his delicacy punished her more than his resentment would have done.

In the evening, the visitors being assembled, Lusane seized the moment when his wife was yet in her own apartment. 'Here,' said he to them, 'is the rendezvous of friendship: if you like it, come often, and let us pass our life together.' They all replied with one voice, that they desired nothing better. 'There,' continued he, presenting to them the good Felisonde, 'there is our worthy and tender father, who will be the soul of our pleasures. At his age, joy has something more sensible and tender in it than in youth, and nothing is more amiable than an amiable old man. He has a daughter whom I love, and whom I would make happy. Assist me, my friends, to keep her among us, and let love, nature, and friendship conspire to render her house every day more agreeable to her. She entertains for the world the prepossessions of her age; but when she shall have tasted the charms of a virtuous society, this vain world will touch her but little.' While Lusane spoke thus, old Felisonde could not refrain letting fall some tears: 'O my friend,' said he, clasping him in his arms, 'happy the father who

at his death can leave his daughter in such good hands.'

The instant after arrived Madam de Lusane. All hearts flew out to meet her; but her own was not easy. She disguised her ill temper under the reserved air of ceremony, and her politeness, though grave, still appeared amiable and touching; such a gift have the natural graces of embellishing every thing.

They played. Lusane made Hortensia observe that all his company played low. 'It is,' said he, 'the way to maintain union and joy. High play prepossesses and alienates our minds: it afflicts those who lose, it imposes on those who win the duty of being grave, and I think it incompatible with the openness of friendship.' The supper was delicious: transport and good-humour were diffused round the table. The heart and the mind were at ease: the gallantry was such as modesty might smile at, and neither decency nor liberty were under restraint.

Hortensia in any other situation would have relished these tranquil pleasures, but the idea of constraint which she attached to them embittered their sweetness.

The day after, Lusane was surprised to find her of a freer and pleasanter air: he suspected that she had taken some new resolution. 'What shall we do to-day?' said he. 'I am going to the play,' said she, 'and I shall come home to supper.'—'Very well; and who are the ladies you are going with?'—'Two of Valsain's friends, Olympia and Artenice.'—'It is cruel to me,' said the husband, 'to be obliged to give you uneasiness continually: but why, Hortensia, will you expose me to it? Do you think me so inconsistent in the principles I have laid down, as to consent that you should be seen in public with those women?'—'To be sure you must consent to it; for the party is settled,

and I shall certainly not fail in it.'—'Pardon me, madam, you shall fail in it, that you may not fail in the regard due to yourself.'—'Is it failing in regard to myself to see women whom all the world sees?'—'Yes, it is to expose yourself to be confounded with them in the opinion of the public.'—'The public, sir, is not unjust, and in the world all persons answer for themselves.'—'The public, madam, supposes with reason that those who are allied in pleasures, are allied in manners, and you ought not to have any thing in common with Olympia and Artenice. If you would not break off with them too abruptly, there is a way: excuse yourself only from the play, and invite them to supper: my door shall be shut against all my friends, and we will be alone with them.'—'No, sir, no,' said she to him with ill humour, 'I will not abuse your complaisance;' and she writ to disengage herself. Nothing had cost her so much as this billet: tears of anger bedewed it. 'To be sure,' said she, 'I care very little for these women; the play interests me still less: but to see one's self opposed in every thing! never to have a will of one's own! to be subjected to that of another! to hear him dictating his laws to me with an insulting tranquillity; that is what drives me mad, and what will make me capable of every thing.'

It was certain, however, that the tranquillity of Lusane was far from having an insulting air, and it was easy to see that he did violence to himself. His father-in-law, who came to sup with him, perceived the melancholy into which he was plunged. 'Ah! sir,' said Lusane to him, 'I see that I have entered into an engagement with you very painful to fulfil!' He told him what had happened. 'Courage, my friend,' said this good father to him; 'let us not be discouraged: if it pleases Heaven, you will render her worthy your cares and love. In pity to me, in pity to my daughter, maintain your resolution. I am going to see her,

and if she complain . . . .'—'If she complain, console her, sir, and appear sensible to her grief: her reason will be more tractable when her heart is comforted. Let her hate me just at present; I expected it, and am not surprised at it; but if the bitterness of her temper should alter the sentiments of nature in her soul, if her confidence in you should be weakened, all would be lost. The goodness of her heart is my only resource, and it is only by an unalterable gentleness that we can prevent her being exasperated. After all, the trials to which I put her are grievous at her time of life, and you must be her support.'

These precautions were useless; whether from vanity, or delicacy, Hortensia had the power to conceal her chagrin from the eyes of her father. 'A good sign,' said Lusane: 'she knows how to subdue herself; and there are none but weak souls of whom we ought to despair.' The day following they dined together alone, and in the most profound silence. At their getting up from table, Hortensia ordered the horses to be put to. 'Where are you going?' said her husband. 'To make an excuse, sir, for the rudeness I was guilty of yesterday.'—'Go, Hortensia, since you will have it so; but if my repose be dear to you, take your last leave of those women.'

Artenice and Olympia, to whom Madam de Fierville had related the scene she had had with Lusane, suspected that it was he who had hindered Hortensia from going to the play with them. 'Yes,' said they to her, 'it was he: we saw him but for a minute, but we have formed our opinion of him: he is a morose, absolute man, and one who will make you unhappy.'—'He has talked to me hitherto only in the style of friendship. It is true, that he has his particular principles, and a way of living but little compatible with the customs of the world; but . . . .'—'But let him live by himself,' replied Olympia, 'and let him leave us

to amuse ourselves in peace. Do you ask him to follow you? A husband is the man in the world we can best spare, and I do not see why you have occasion for his advice to receive whomsoever you think proper, and to go and see whom you please.' —'No, madam,' said Hortensia to her, 'it is not so easy as you imagine to put one's self, at my age, above the will of a husband, who has behaved so well to me.'—'She gives way; see, she is quite tamed,' replied Artenice. 'Ah, my dear! you do not know what it is to yield once to a man, with whom one is to pass one's life. Our husbands are our tyrants if they are not our slaves. Their authority is a torrent which swells as it runs: we can stop it only at its source; and I speak from experience: for having been guilty of an unfortunate complaisance to my husband twice, I have been for six months together obliged to struggle with him for the ascendancy which my weakness had given him; and but for an unparalleled effort of courage, it would have been all over with me; I was a gone woman.'—'That depends upon tempers,' said Hortensia, 'and my husband is not one of those who are to be brought down by obstinacy.'—'Undeceive yourself,' replied Olympia; 'there is not one whom gentleness ever reconciles: it is by opposing them that we rule them; it is by the dread of ridicule and shame that we hold them: what are you afraid of? We are very strong when we are handsome, and have nothing to reproach ourselves. Your cause is that of all the women; and the men themselves, the men who know how to live, will be on your side.' Hortensia objected the example of her cousin, whom Lusane had made happy. They replied that her cousin was a weak woman; that if the life which she had led was a good one to her, it was because she knew no better; but that a woman, launched into the great world, who had tasted the charms of it, and formed its ornament, was not made to bury herself in the

solitude of her own house, and the narrow circle of an obscure acquaintance. They talked to her of a superb ball which the Duchess of . . . was to give the next day. 'All the handsome women will be invited there,' said they to her: 'if your husband prevents your going, it is a stroke that will cry out for vengeance; and we advise you, as friends, to seize that occasion to make a noise and to part.'

Though Hortensia was very far from wishing to follow these violent counsels, she still retained a bitterness in her soul, at seeing that her unhappiness was going to be known in the world, and that they would look for her in vain at those feasts where but for this she would have seen herself adored. On her return home, a card was put into her hands: she read it with impatience, and sighed after having read it. Her trembling hand still held it, when her husband accosted her. 'It is,' said she to him, carelessly, 'a card of invitation to the Duchess of ————'s ball.'—'Well, madam?'—'Well, sir, I shall not go: be easy.'—'Why then, Hortensia, deprive yourself of decent pleasures? Have I forbid them you? The honour that is done you, pleases me as much and more than it does yourself: go to the ball, eclipse every thing there that is most lovely: that will be a triumph to me.' Hortensia was not able to dissemble her surprise and joy. 'Ah, Lusane!' said she to him, 'why are you not always the same? there now is the husband I promised myself. I recover him now; but is it for a long time?'—Lusane's company assembled in the evening, and Hortensia was adorable. They proposed suppers, parties to the play; she engaged herself to them with the best grace. Cheerful with the men, engaging with the women, she charmed them all. Lusane alone dared not yet deliver himself up to the joy which she inspired: he foresaw that this good humour would not continue long without

clouds. In the mean time he said just one word to his valet-de-chambre, and the next day, when his wife asked for her domino, it was like a surprise in a play. They presented her with a dress for the ball, which the hand of Flora seemed to have varied with the most beautiful colours of the spring; those flowers in which the art of Italy equals nature, and deceives the ravished eyes, those flowers ran in garlands, over the light waves of a silk tissue of the most brilliant freshness. Hortensia, in love with her dress, her husband, and herself, could not conceal her transport. Her glass being consulted, promised her the most striking successes, and that oracle never deceived her: accordingly, on appearing at the assembly, she enjoyed the flattering emotion occasioned by unanimous admiration; and to a young woman this ebb and flow, this murmur, have altogether something so touching! It is easy to judge that at her return Lusane was pretty well treated; it seemed as if she wanted to paint all the transports which she had raised. At first he received her caresses without reflection, for the wisest sometimes forget themselves: but when he recollected himself, 'A ball,' said he, 'a domino, turn this young head! Ah! what conflicts have I yet to sustain before I see her such as I could wish her!'

Hortensia had seen at the ball all those giddy young people, from whom her husband wanted to detach her. 'He does right,' said they to her, 'to grow reasonable, and to restore you to your friends: he was going to become the public jest, and we had made a league to distress him wherever he appeared; tell him, then, for his own ease, to vouchsafe to let us see you. If we have the unhappiness to displease him, we give him leave to put himself under no restraint; but let him be contented with rendering himself invisible, without requiring that his wife should be so.' Intimidated by these menaces, Hortensia gave her husband to understand

that they took it ill that his door was shut against them; that people of fashion complained of it, and proposed to remonstrate even to him upon it. 'If they do,' said he, 'I will teach them how to take their revenge on me: let each of them marry a handsome woman, live at home with their friends, and shut their doors in my face every time that I go to trouble them.'

Some days after, two of these young fellows, piqued at not having been able to introduce themselves to Hortensia, saw Lusane at the opera, and went up to him, in order to ask him the reason of the rude behaviour of his Swiss. 'Sir,' said the Chevalier de St. Placide to him, 'have they told you that the Marquis de Cirval and myself have been twice at your house?'—'Yes, gentlemen, I know that you have given yourselves that trouble.'—'Neither yourself nor your lady were to be seen.'—'That is very often the case.'—'Yet you see company.'—'Only friends.'—'We are Hortensia's friends, and in Valsain's time we always saw her. Ah, sir! what an agreeable man was Valsain! she has not lost by the exchange: but he was the genteelest, the most complaisant of all husbands.'—'I know it.'—'He, for example, was not jealous.'—'Happy man!'—'You speak as if you envied him; can it be true, as they say, that you are not so easy?'—'Ah, gentlemen! if ever you marry, take care you do not love your wives; it is a cruel thing, this jealousy!'—'What, are you really come to that?'—'Alas! yes, for my sins.'—'But Hortensia is so virtuous!'—'I know it.'—'She lived like an angel with Valsain.'—'I hope she will live the same with me too.'—'Why then do her the injustice of being jealous?'—'It is an involuntary emotion, which I cannot account for.'—'You confess then it is a folly?'—'To such a degree, that I cannot see near my wife any man of a handsome figure, or distinguished merit, but my head turns; and this is the reason that my gate is shut against

the most amiable people in the world.'—'The marquis and I,' said the chevalier, 'are not dangerous, and we hope . . . . . .'—'You, gentlemen, you are among those who would make me unhappy all my life. I know you too well not to fear you: and since I must confess it, I have myself req ired of my wife that she should never see you again.'—'But, Mr. President, that is but a sorry kind of a compliment.'—'Ah, gentlemen! it is the most agreeable one that a jealous husband can make you.'—'Chevalier,' said the marquis, when Lusane had quitted them, 'we wanted, I thought, to make a jest of this man.'—'That was my design.'—'I am afraid, God forgive me, that he makes a jest of us.'—'I have some suspicion of it: but I will take my revenge on him.'—'How?'—'As men revenge themselves on a husband.'

The same evening, at supper, at the Marchioness of Bellune's, they represented Lusane as the most odious of men. 'And the little woman,' said the marchioness, 'has the meanness to suffer him to restrain her! Ah! I will give her a lesson.' Madam de Bellune's house was the rendezvous of all the giddy people both of city and court, and her secret for drawing them together was to assemble the handsomest women. Hortensia was invited to a ball which she gave. There was a necessity of acquainting Lusane with it beforehand; but without having any appearance of asking his consent, she just dropped a word *en passant*. 'No, my dear,' said Lusane to Hortensia, 'Madam de Bellune's house is in a style that does not suit you. Her ball is a rendezvous at which you ought not to be. The public is not obliged to believe you more infallible than another; and in order to prevent all suspicion of miscarriage, the surest way is to avoid the hazard of it.' The young woman, so much the more irritated at this refusal, as she did not expect it, burst into complaints and reproaches: 'You abuse,' said she to him, 'the authority which

I have confided to you; but beware of driving me to extremities.'—'I understand you, madam,' replied Lusane to her, in a firmer and graver tone: 'but as long as I esteem you, I shall not fear this menace, and I should fear it still less, if I were to cease to esteem you.' Hortensia, who had annexed no idea to the words that had just escaped her, blushed at the meaning they seemed to carry with them, and replied only by tears. Lusane seized the moment when resentment yielded to confusion. 'I grow odious to you,' said he: 'yet what is my crime? that of saving your youth from the dangers which surround it, of detaching you from that which might cast a blemish, I do not say on your innocence, but on your reputation, of wanting to make you love soon what it is necessary that you must love always.'—'Yes, sir, your intentions are good; but you have a bad method of carrying them into execution. You want to make me love my duty, and you make a slavery of it; there may be some ill consequences to be foreseen in my connexions: but I must dissolve instead of breaking them, and detach myself insensibly from the people who displease you, without making you an object of ridicule, by imprisoning me in my own house.'—'When the ridicule is without foundation,' replied Lusane, 'it recoils on those who give it.—The prison of which you complain is the asylum of virtue, and will also be that of peace and happiness whenever you shall think proper to make it so. You upbraid me with not having used a little delicacy towards these people and yourself; I have had my reasons for cutting to the quick. I know that at your time of life the contagion of fashion, example, and habitude, make new progress every day; and that without cutting off all communication, there is no way of guarding against it. It gives me inexpressible uneasiness to talk to you in an absolute tone; but it is my affection for you that gives me the courage: a friend ought to know

on occasion how to contradict a friend. Be well assured, then, that as long as I love you, I shall have the strength to resist you; and woe to you if I abandon you.'—'Woe to me! you esteem me very little if you think me lost the moment you cease to lead me in a string. No, sir, I knew how to conduct myself long ago; and Valsain, who did me justice, never had occasion to repent of his confidence. I own to you, that in my husband I did not intend to create myself a tyrant. In order to submit to your will, one ought to have a strength or weakness which I have not; all the denials you impose on me are grievous, and I will never accustom myself to them.'

Lusane, left alone to himself, reproached himself for the tears he had made her shed. 'What have I undertaken?' said he, 'and what a trial to my soul! I her tyrant! I, who love her more than my life, and whose heart is torn in pieces with her complaints! If I persist, I drive her to distraction; and if I give way one single moment, I lose the fruit of my perseverance. One step into this round of company, which she loves, will engage her in it anew. I must support this cruel character, this character so much more cruel to myself than to her.'

Hortensia passed the night in the greatest trouble; all violent measures presented themselves to her mind; but the probity of her mind shuddered at them. 'Why discourage myself?' said she, when her wrath was a little appeased. 'This man commands himself, and rules me because he does not love me; but if he should ever come to love me, I should soon reign in my turn. Let me use the only arms nature has given us, gentleness and seduction.'

Lusane, who had not closed his eyes, came to ask her in the morning, with an air of friendship, how she had passed the night. 'You know how,' said she to him, 'you who take a pleasure in disturbing

my repose. Ah, Lusane! was it for you to be the cause of my unhappiness? who could have told me that I should have repented of a choice which I made with such a good will, and such good intentions?' In pronouncing these words, she had stretched out her hand to him, and two eyes, the most eloquent that love ever yet made speak, reproached him for his ingratitude. 'My better half,' said he to her, embracing her, 'believe that I have placed all my glory and happiness in making you happy. I would have your life strewed with flowers: but permit me to pluck away the thorns. Wish for what may never cost you any regret, and be assured it shall be fulfilled in my soul, as soon as formed in thine. The law which I impose upon you is only your own will; not that of the moment, which is a whim, a caprice; but that which will arise from reflection and experience, that which you will have ten years hence: I entertain for you the tenderness of a lover, the frankness of a friend, and the uneasy vigilance of a father: there is my heart; it is worthy of you, and if you are still unjust enough to complain of it, you shall not long have occasion to do so.' This discourse was accompanied with the most touching marks of a passionate love, and Hortensia appeared sensible of them. Eight days passed away in the best understanding, in the most intimate union that could reign between two married people. To the charms of beauty, of youth, Hortensia joined the enchantment of those timid caresses; which love, in conjunction with duty, seems to steal from modesty. It is the finest of all toils to emmesh a tender heart. But was all this really sincere? Lusane thought so; I think so too. After all, she would not be the first woman who should have made her inclination agree with her views, and her policy with her pleasures.

In the mean time, they approach those days consecrated to folly and joy, during which we are as foolish, but much less joyous than our fathers.

Hortensia gave some intimation to Lusane of her desire to give an entertainment, in which music should precede a supper, which should be followed by a dance. Lusane consented with the best grace in the world, but not without precaution: he agreed with his wife on the choice and number of persons whom she should invite; and according to this arrangement the cards were distributed.

The day arrives, and every thing is prepared with the attention of a magnificent lover; but that very morning the Swiss asks to speak to his master. 'Besides those who shall come with cards, it is my lady's pleasure,' said he to him, 'that I admit all who come to the ball. Is that your intention, sir?'—'To be sure,' said Lusane, concealing his surprise, 'and you ought not to doubt but I approve what your lady orders.' He then went directly to her, and having told her what had just happened, 'You have exposed yourself,' said he, 'to be put to shame before your servants; you have hazarded what a woman cannot too much conciliate, the confidence of your husband. Is it for you, Hortensia, to make use of surprise towards me? Were I less persuaded of the probity of your soul, what an opinion would you give me of it, and what would have been the consequence of this imprudence? The pleasure of afflicting me for a moment, and of making me more mistrustful of you than I would wish to be. Ah! suffer me to esteem you for ever, and respect yourself as much as I respect you! I will not humble you by revoking the order you have given, but you will give me unspeakable uneasiness if you do not revoke it yourself, and your conduct this day shall be my rule all my life.'—'I have committed a fault,' said she; 'I see it, and I will repair it. I will send word that I shall have neither music, nor supper, nor ball to-night; I would not wear an appearance of joy when I have a deadly grief in my heart. The public shall know that I am unhappy, but I am weary of dissembling.'

Lusame then falling at her feet, 'If I loved you less,' said he, 'I should yield reproaches; but I adore you, I will subdue myself: I shall die of grief to be hated by my wife, but I cannot live in the shame of having betrayed her by abandoning her. I took a sensible pleasure in giving you an entertainment; you refuse it, because I exclude what is not worthy to approach you; you declare to me from thence, that a frivolous world is dearer to you than your husband: it is enough; I will go and give notice that the entertainment will not take place.' Hortensia, moved to the bottom of her soul with what she had just heard, and more touched still with the tears that she had seen trickle from his eyes, recollected herself. 'What am I going to persist in?' said she. 'Are the people, whom he wants me to detach myself from, my friends? Would they sacrifice the slightest of their interests to me? and yet for them I lose the quiet of my life, I trouble it, I embitter it, I renounce every thing that can form its happiness. It is spite, it is vanity, that inspire me. Have I even chosen to examine whether my husband was right? I have seen nothing but the humiliation of obeying. But who shall command if it be not the wisest? I am a slave; and who is not so, or who ought not to be so, to their duties? I call an honest man a tyrant, who conjures me with tears in his eyes to take care of my reputation! Where then is that pride with which I reproach him? Ah! I should perhaps be much to be pitied if he were as weak as I. I afflict him in the very moment that he had shown the most delicate attention to spare me! These are injuries, these are real ones, and not those which I attribute to him.'—'Go,' said she to one of her women, 'go and tell your master that I would speak to him.' Scarce had she sent this message, when a sudden qualm seized her. 'I am going then,' said she, 'to consent to mope all my life: for I cannot conceal it from myself, but that

one has amusements only in the great world; and all those good folks among whom he wants me to live have not the charms of Valsain's friends.' As this reflection had a little changed the disposition of her soul, she contented herself with telling Lusane that she would willingly give way to him for this once. She excused herself to the people who had asked to be admitted to her ball: and the entertainment, which was as brilliant as possible, had all the vivacity of joy without tumult and confusion.

'Tell me then, my dear, if any thing has been wanting to our amusement?' said Lusane to Hortensia. 'You disguise sometimes,' said she to him, 'the constraint you put upon me;.but entertainments do not come every day. It is in the void and silence of her house that a woman of my age draws in the poison of dulness; and if you would see that slow poison consume my youth, you will have all the pleasures of it.'—'No, madam,' said he to her, penetrated with grief; 'I have not that deliberate cruelty of which you suspect me. If I must renounce the care of making you happy, that dear, that pleasing care, which ought to take up my whole life, at least I will not have to reproach myself with having poisoned the happiness of your days. Neither I, nor the virtuous friends I have chosen for you, have sufficient to make you amends for the denials I occasion you: without that crowd that surrounded you, my house seems a dreadful solitude to you; you have the cruelty to tell me so yourself: I must restore you then to that liberty without which you like nothing. I ask of you but one more act of complaisance: to-morrow I shall bring you a new set of company; and if you do not judge them worthy to employ your leisure, if they do not take place of this world, which is so dear to you, all is over, and I give you up to yourself.' Hortensia had not much difficulty in granting him what he asked: she was very sure that he had

nothing to present her which was equivalent to her liberty: but it was not purchasing it too dear to submit to this slight trial.

The next day, on her waking, she saw her husband enter with a shining countenance, in which sparkled love and joy. 'Here,' said he, 'is the new company which I propose to you; if you are not satisfied with this, I no longer know how to amuse you.' Imagine the surprise of this sensible mother on seeing before her the two children whom she had by Valsain. 'Children,' said Lusane, taking them in his arms in order to lift them to Hortensia's bed, 'embrace your mother, and prevail on her tenderness to vouchsafe to share the cares which I shall take to bring you up.' Hortensia pressed them to her bosom, and bathed them with her tears. 'Till nature,' continued Lusane, 'grant me the title of father, love and friendship give it me, and I am going to fulfil its duties.'—'Come, my love,' said Hortensia, this is to me the dearest and tenderest of all your lessons. I had forgot that I was a mother; I was going to forget that I was a wife. You recal me to those duties; and those two bands united bind me for all my life.'

THE CONNOISSEUR.

CELICOUR, from the age of fifteen, had been in the country what is called a little prodigy. He made the most gallant verses in the world. There was not one handsome woman in the neighbourhood whom he had not celebrated, and who had not discovered that his eyes had still more spirit than his verses. It was pity to suffer such great talents to lie buried in a little country town: Paris ought to be their theatre, and he managed so well that his father resolved to send him there. This father was an honest man, who loved wit without having any himself, and who admired, without knowing why, every thing that came from the capital; he had even some literary relations there, and in the number of his correspondents was a *Connoisseur*, called M. de Fintac. It was particularly to him that Celicour was recommended.

Fintac received the son of his friend with the kindness of one who takes persons under his protection. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have heard of you: I know that you have had success in the country; but in the country, believe me, arts and letters are yet in their infancy. Without taste, wit and genius produce nothing but what is deformed, and there is no taste but at Paris. Begin then by persuading yourself that you are but just born, and by forgetting all that you have learnt.'—'What would I not forget?' said Celicour, casting his eyes on a niece of eighteen, whom the Connoisseur had with him. 'Yes, sir, it is to-day that I begin to live. I know not what charm breathes in these places; but it unfolds in me faculties unknown to me before: I seem to myself to have acquired new

senses, a new soul.'—'Good,' cried Fintac, 'there now is enthusiasm: he is born a poet, and from this single stroke I warrant him one.'—'There is no poetry in that,' replied Celicour; 'it is plain and simple nature.'—'So much the better! there is the true talent. And at what age did you feel yourself animated with this divine fire?'—'Alas! sir, I have had some sparks of it in the country, but I never experienced there this lively and sudden heat which penetrates me at this instant.'—'It is the air of Paris,' said Fintac. 'It is the air of your house,' said Celicour: 'I am in the temple of the Muses.' The Connoisseur found that this young man had happy dispositions.

Agathe, the most beautiful little wag that Love ever formed, lost not one word of this conversation: and certain sly looks, a certain smile which played on her lips, gave Celicour to understand that she did not mistake the double meaning of his replies. 'I am greatly pleased with your father,' added the Connoisseur, 'for having sent you hither at an age when the mind is docile enough to receive right impressions; but guard yourself against bad. You will find at Paris more false connoisseurs than good judges. Do not go and consult every body, but stick close to the instruction of a man who has never been mistaken in any thing.' Celicour, who did not imagine that one might praise one's self with so much openness, had the simplicity to ask who that infallible man was? 'It is I, sir,' replied Fintac, with a tone of confidence; 'I, who have passed my life with all the artists and *literati* of greatest consideration: I, who for these forty years have exercised myself in distinguishing, in things both of fancy and of taste, the real and permanent beauties, the beauties of mode and of convention. I say it, because it is well known, and there is no vanity in agreeing to a known fact.'

Extraordinary as this language was, Celicour

hardly paid any attention to it, which was engaged by an object more interesting. Agathe had sometimes deigned to lift up her eyes upon him, and those eyes seemed to tell him the most obliging things in the world; but was it their natural vivacity, or the pleasure of seeing their triumph, that animated them? That was a point to be cleared up: Celicour therefore begged the Connoisseur to allow him the honour of visiting him often, and Fintac himself pressed him to it.

'On his second visit, the young man was obliged to wait till the Connoisseur was visible, and to pass a quarter of an hour *tête-à-tête* with the lovely niece. She made him many excuses, and he replied that there was no occasion for them. 'Sir,' said Agathe to him, 'my uncle is charmed with you.'—'That is a very pleasing piece of success to me; but, madam, there is one which would touch me still more.'—'My uncle says you are formed to succeed in every thing.'—'Ah! why do not you think the same?'—'I am pretty often of my uncle's opinion.'—'Assist me then to merit his kindness.'—'You seem to me to want no assistance.'—'Pardon me; I know that great men have almost all of them their singularities, sometimes even weaknesses. To flatter their tastes, their opinions, their temper, one must know them: to know them one must study them; and, if you please, beautiful Agathe, you can abridge that study for me. After all, what is the point? To gain the good-will of your uncle? Nothing in the world is more innocent.'—'Is it the custom then in the country to come to an understanding with the nieces, in order to succeed with the uncles? That is very dexterous, indeed.'—'Nothing in it but what is very natural.'—'But if my uncle had, as you say, singularities and foibles, must I tell you of them?'—'Why not? Would you suspect me of wanting to make an ill use of them?'—'No; but his niece! . . . . . .'—'Very well; his niece

ought to wish that one should endeavour to please him. He is past the time of life in which we correct ourselves; nothing remains then but to manage him.'—'An admirable remover of scruples.'—'Ah! you would not have any if you knew me better; but no, you have dissembled.'—'Truly, I see the gentleman for the second time; how can I have any secrets from him?'—'I am indiscreet, I confess, and I ask your pardon.'—'No, it is I who have been wrong, to let you fancy the thing more serious than it is. The fact is this: my uncle is a good man, and would never have pretended to any thing more, if they had not put it into his head to know every thing, to judge of arts and letters, to be the guide, estimator, and arbiter of talents. That hurts nobody; but it draws a crowd of blockheads to our house, whom my uncle protects, and with whom he shares the ridicule of being a wit. It were much to be wished for his own ease that he would abandon this chimera; for the public seem to have made it their business never to be of his opinion, and we have every day some new scene.'—'You afflict me.'—'You are now in possession of all the secrets of the family, and we have nothing more to conceal from you.' Just as she finished, word was brought to Celicour that the Connoisseur was visible.

The study into which he was introduced announced the multiplicity of his studies, and the variety of his knowledge; the floor was covered with folios piled up on one another in the utmost confusion, rolls of prints, maps lying open, and manuscripts jumbled together; on a table, a Tacitus open near a sepulchral lamp, surrounded by antique medals; farther off, a telescope on its carriage, the sketch of a picture on the easel, a model of bas-relief in wax, scraps of natural history; and in the fret-work of the ceiling, representations of books picturesquely overturned. The young man knew not where to set his foot, and his embarrass-

ment gave the Connoisseur infinite pleasure. 'Forgive,' said he to him, 'the confusion in which you find me: this is my study; I have occasion for all these things at hand: but do not imagine that the same disorder reigns in my head: every thing there is in its place; the variety, nay the number itself, causes no confusion there.'—'Wonderful!' said Celicour, who knew not what he said, for his thoughts were still on Agathe. 'O, very wonderful,' replied Fintac; 'and I am often surprised myself when I reflect on the mechanism of the memory, and the manner in which the ideas class and arrange themselves as fast as they arise: it seems as if there were drawers for every different kind of knowledge. For example: across that multitude of things which had passed through my imagination, who will explain to me how I came to retrace in my memory, to a given point, what I had read formerly on the return of the comet? for you are to know that it was I who gave the watch-word to our astronomers.'—'You, sir?'—'They never thought of it, and but for me, the comet had passed *incognito* over our horizon. I have not boasted of it, as you may plainly see: I tell it you in confidence.'—'And why suffer yourself to be deprived of the glory of so important a piece of intelligence?'—'Good! I should never have done if I were to lay claim to all that they steal from me. In general, my lad, take it for granted, that a solution, a discovery, a piece of poetry, of painting, or of eloquence, belong not, so much as is imagined, to the person who takes the credit of it to himself. But what is the object of a connoisseur? To encourage talents at the same time that he enlightens them. Whether the thought of this bas-relief, the disposition of this picture, the beauties of the parts, or the whole of this play, be the artist's or mine, is matter of indifference to the progress of the art; now that is all my concern. They come, I tell them my thought; they listen

to me, they make their advantage of it. 'Tis excellent: I am recompensed when they have succeeded.'—'Nothing finer,' said Celicour: 'the arts ought to regard you as their Apollo. And does Mademoiselle Agathe condescend to be also their muse?'—'No, my niece is a madcap, whom I wanted to bring up with care; but she has no taste for study. I had engaged her to cast her eye over history; she returned me my books, saying that it was not worth while to read, for the sake of seeing in all ages illustrious madmen and rogues sporting with a crowd of fools. I wanted to try if she had a greater taste for eloquence; she pretended that Cicero, Demosthenes, &c. were only dexterous jugglers; and when one had good reasons, there was no need of so many words. For morality, she maintains that she knows it all by heart, and that Lucas, her foster-father, is as wise as Socrates. There is nothing therefore but poetry that amuses her sometimes: and then she prefers fables to the more sublime poems, and tells you plainly that she had rather hear Fontaine's animals speak, than the heroes of Virgil and Homer. In a word, she is at eighteen as much a child as at twelve; and in the midst of the most serious, the most interesting conversations, you would be surprised to see her amusing herself with a trifle, or growing dull the moment one would captivate her attention.' Celicour, laughing within himself, took leave of M. de Fintac, who did him the favour to invite him to dine with him the next day.

The young man was so transported that he slept not that night. To dine with Agathe! it was the happiest day of his life. He arrives, and by his beauty, by his youth, by the air of serenity diffused over his countenance, one might have imagined they saw Apollo, if Fintac's Parnassus had been better composed; but as he wanted none but dependents and flatterers, he drew to his house only such persons as were fit to be so.

He introduced Celicour to them as a young poet of the greatest expectation, and made him take his place at table at his right hand. From that moment behold all the eyes of envy fixed upon him. Each of the guests thought he saw his own place usurped, and swore in the bottom of their souls to take their revenge on him by decrying the first work he should publish. In the mean time Celicour was graciously received, caressed by all these gentlemen, and took them from that instant for the most honest people in the world. A new comer excited emulation: Wit hoisted all her sails: they judged the republic of letters: and as it is just to mingle commendation with criticism, they praised generously all the dead, and tore in pieces the living, the present company always excepted. All the new works, which had succeeded without passing under the inspection of Fintac, could but have their day, and that a short one; all those to which he had given the seal of his approbation were to attain to immortality, whatever the present age thought of them. They ran through all kinds of literature; and in order to give more scope to erudition and criticism, they brought on the carpet this entirely new question, viz. 'Which merited the preference, Corneille or Racine?' They said also on the subject the finest things in the world, when the little niece, who had not spoke a word, took it into her head to ask simply which of the two fruits, the orange or the peach, had the most exquisite taste, and merited the most commendation? Her uncle blushed at her simplicity, and the guests all looked down without deigning to reply to this idle foolery. 'Niece,' said Fintac, 'at your age one should hear and hold one's tongue.' Agathe, with an imperceptible half smile, looked at Celicour, who had understood her perfectly well, and whose glance consoled her for the contempt of the company. I forgot to mention that he was placed opposite to her, and you may easily imagine that he listened very little to what

was said around him. But the Connoisseur, who examined his countenance, perceived in it a very extraordinary fire. 'See,' said he to his geniuses, 'see how talent pierces.'—'Yes,' replied one of them, 'we see it transpire like water through the pores of an eolipile.' Fintac, taking Celicour by the hand, said to him, 'There is a comparison now! poetry and philosophy blended together! It is thus that the talents border on each other, and that the Muses join hands. Confess,' continued, he, 'that such dinners are not found in your country-towns; and you see nothing: there are days when these gentlemen have even a hundred times more wit.'—'It would be hard not to have it,' said one of them: 'we are at the fountain head, *et purpureo bibimus ore nectar*.'—'Ah! *purpureo!*' replied Fintac modestly; 'you do me a great deal of honour. Hark, young man, learn to quote.' The young man was all the while very attentive to catch Agathe's looks, who on her side thought him very handsome.

On rising from table, they went to walk in the garden, where the Connoisseur had taken care to get together the rare plants from all quarters. He had, among other wonders, a parti-coloured cabbage, which drew the admiration of naturalists. Its folds, its festoon, the mixture of its colours, was the most astonishing thing in the world. 'Let them show,' said Fintac, 'a foreign plant which nature has taken the trouble to form with more labour and delicacy. It is for the sake of avenging Europe on the prejudice of certain *virtuosi* in favour of every thing that comes from the Indies and the new world, that I have preserved this fine cabbage.'

While they were admiring this prodigy, Agathe and Celicour had joined each other, as it were without intending it, in a neighbouring walk. 'Beautiful Agathe,' said the young man, showing her a rose, 'would you let this flower die on the

stalk?'—'Where then would you have it die?'—'Where I would die myself.' Agathe blushed at this answer; and in that instant her uncle, with two wits, came and seated themselves in an adjacent arbour, from whence, without being perceived, he could overhear them. 'If it is true,' continued Celicour, 'that souls pass from one body into another, I wish after my death to be such a rose as that. If any profane hand advances to gather me, I will conceal myself amid the prickles; but if some charming nymph deigns to cast her eyes on me, I will lean towards her, expand my bosom, exhale my perfumes, mingle them with her breath; and the desire of pleasing her shall animate my colours.'—'Very well, you will do so much that you will be plucked off your stalk, and the moment after you will be no more.'—'Ah, madam, do you consider as nothing the happiness of being one moment...' His eyes finished saying what his mouth had begun. 'And I,' said Agathe, disguising her confusion, 'if I had my choice, would wish to be changed into a dove, which is gentleness and innocence itself.'—'Add to these, tenderness and fidelity: yes, beautiful Agathe! the choice is worthy of you. The dove is the bird of Venus; Venus would distinguish you among your fellows; you would be the ornament of her car: Love would repose himself on your wings, or rather he would cherish you in his bosom. It would be from his divine mouth that your bill would take ambrosia.' Agathe interrupted him, saying, that he carried his fictions too far. 'One word more,' said Celicour: 'a dove has a mate; if it depended on you to choose yours, what kind of a soul would you give him?'—'That of a she friend,' replied she. At these words Celicour looked on her with two eyes, in which were painted love, reproach, and grief.

'Very well!' said the uncle, getting up, 'very well! there now is fine and good poetry for you. The image of this rose is of a freshness worthy

Van-huysum; that of the dove is a little picture of Boucher, the freshest, the most gallant in the world, *ut pictura poesis*. Courage, my lad, courage! the allegory is extremely well supported; we shall make something of you. Agathe, I have been pretty well pleased with your dialogue, and here is M. de Lexergue, who is as much surprised at it as I.'—'It is certain,' said M. de Lexergue, 'that there is in Miss's language something Anacreontic: it is the impression of her uncle's taste; he says nothing which is not stamped with the mark of sound antiquity.' M. Lucide found in Celicour's fictions the *molle atque facetum*. 'We must conclude this little scene,' said Fintac; 'we must put it into verse; it will be one of the prettiest things we have ever seen.' Celicour said, that in order to complete it, he stood in need of Agathe's assistance; and, that the dialogue might have more ease and freedom in it, they thought it right to leave them alone. 'To the dove, your mate, *the soul of a she friend!*' resumed Celicour: 'Ah! beautiful Agathe, is your heart made only for friendship? Is it for that love has delighted to assemble in you so many charms?'—'There, now,' said Agathe, smiling, 'is the dialogue excellently renewed. I have but to take the reply: there is matter enough to carry us a great way.'—'If you please,' said Celicour, 'it is easy to abridge it.'—'Let us talk of something else,' interrupted she. 'Did the dinner amuse you?'—'I heard there but one single word full of sense and refinement, which they had the folly to take for a simple question: all the rest escaped me. My soul was not at my ear.'—'It was very happy!'—'Ah! very happy! for it was in my eyes.'—'If I pleased, I might pretend not to hear, or not to understand you; but I never put on disguise. I think it very natural then, under favour of our wits, for you to take more pleasure in looking at me than in listening to them; and I confess to you, in my turn, that I am

not sorry at having one to speak to me, though it were only by his eyes, in order to save me from the spleen that they give me. Now then we are come to a right understanding, and we shall amuse ourselves, for we have originals, entertaining enough in their kind. For example, this M. Lucide thinks he always sees in things what nobody else has perceived in them. He seems as if nature had told her secret in his ear; but every body is not worthy to know what he thinks. He chooses in a circle a privileged confident. This is commonly the most distinguished person; he leans mysteriously towards that person, and whispers his opinion. As for M. de Lexergue, he is a scholar of the first class: full of contempt for every thing modern, he esteems things by the number of ages. He would choose even that a young woman should have the air of antiquity, and he honours me with his attention, because he thinks I have the profile of the Empress Poppea. In the group which you see below there, is an upright starch man, who makes pretty little nothings; but does not know what he means by them. He demands a day for reading; he names his auditory himself: he requires that the gate should be shut against every profane person; he arrives on his tip-toes, places himself before a table between two flambeaus; draws mysteriously out of his pocket a rose-coloured port-folio; throws around him a gracious look, which demands silence; announces a little romance of his own making, which has had the good fortune to please some persons of consideration: reads it deliberately, in order to be the better tasted, and goes quite to the end, without perceiving that every body yawns at him. That little fidgeting man near him, so full of gesticulation, excites a pity in me which I am not able to express. Wit is to him like those sneezings which are going to come, but never do come. We see him dying with the desire of saying fine things; he has them at his tongue's end: but they seem to

escape him the moment he is going to catch them. Ah! he is a man much to be pitied! That dry and tall man who walks alone, apart from them, is the most thoughtful and most empty person I know: because he has a bob-wig, and the vapours, he thinks himself an English philosopher: he grows heavy on the wing of a fly, and is so obscure in his ideas, that one is sometimes tempted to think him profound.'

While Agathe's wit was exercising itself on these characters, Celicour had his eyes fixed on hers. 'Ah!' said he, 'that your uncle, who knows so many things, should know so little of his niece's understanding; he represents you as a child!'—'Oh! to be sure, and these gentlemen all consider me as such. Accordingly they put no restraint upon themselves, and the absurdity of wit is with me quite at its ease. Do not go and betray me now.'—'Never fear; but we must, beautiful Agathe, cement our understanding by stricter ties than these of friendship.'—'You do injustice to friendship,' replied Agathe: 'there is something sweeter perhaps; but there is nothing more solid.'

At these words they came to interrupt them, and the Connoisseur walking along with Celicour, asked him if the dialogue with his niece had been cleverly resumed. 'It is not precisely what I wanted,' said the young man, 'but I will endeavour to supply it.'—'I am sorry,' says Fintac, 'that we interrupted you. Nothing is so difficult as to recover the natural thread, when once we let it escape. This giddy girl has not caught your idea. She has sometimes lights; but all on a sudden they vanish. I hope, at least, that marriage will form her.'—'You think then of marrying her?' demanded Celicour, with a faltering voice. 'Yes,' replied Fintac, 'and I depend upon you for the worthy celebration of that festival. You have seen M. de Lexergue; he is a man of great sense and profound erudition. It is to him that I give

my niece.' If Fintac had observed Celicour's countenance, he would have seen it grow pale at this news. 'A man so serious, and so full of application, as M. de Lexergue, has need,' continued he, 'of something to dissipate him. He is rich: he has taken a liking to this girl; and in a week's time he is to marry her; but he exacts the greatest secrecy, and my niece herself knows nothing of it yet. As for you, it is highly necessary that you should be initiated into the mystery of an union which you are to celebrate. *O Hymen! ô Hymenæ!* you understand me. It is an epithalamium that I ask of you, and here now is an opportunity to signalise yourself.'—'Ah, sir!...'—'No modesty: it smothers all talents.'—'Excuse me.'—'You shall execute it: it is a piece in your own way, and which will do you a great deal of honour. My niece is young and handsome; and with an imagination and soul, one is not exhausted on such a subject. With respect to the husband, I have already told you, he is an extraordinary man. Nobody so knowing in antiques. He has a cabinet of medals which he values at forty thousand crowns. He was even going to see the ruins of Herculaneum, and was very near making a voyage to Palmyra. You see how many images all this presents to poetry. But you are ruminating upon it already; yes, I see on your countenance that profound meditation which hatches the buds of genius, and disposes them to fruitfulness. Go then, go and profit of such precious moments. I am going also to bury myself in study.'

Seized with consternation at what he had just heard, Celicour burned with impatience to see Agathe again. The next day he made a pretence to go and consult the Connoisseur; and before he went into his study, he asked if she was to be seen. 'Ah! mademoiselle,' said he to her, 'you see a man driven to despair.'—'What ails you?'—'I am undone: you are to marry M. de Lexergue.'—

'Who has told you that story?'—'Who? M. de Fintac himself.'—'Seriously?'—'He has charged me to write your epithalamium.'—'Very well; will it be a pretty one?'—'You laugh! you think it charming to have M. de Lexergue for a husband?'—'Oh! very charming!'—'Ah! at least, cruel maid, in pity to me who adore you, and who am to lose you!...' Agathe interrupted him as he fell on his knees. 'Confess,' said she to him, 'that these moments of distraction are convenient for a declaration: as the person that makes it is not himself, so she who hears him dare not complain; and, by favour of this disorder, love thinks it may risk every thing. But softly; moderate yourself, and let us see what distracts you.'—'Your tranquillity, cruel as you are.'—'You would have me afflict myself then at a misfortune which I am not afraid of?'—'I tell you, that it is determined that you shall marry M. de Lexergue.'—'How would you have them determine, without me, on that which, without me, cannot be put in execution?'—'But if your uncle has given his word?'—'If he has given it, he shall retract it.'—'How would you have the courage?'—'The courage of not saying *yes!* a fine effort of resolution!'—'Ah! I am at the summit of joy!'—'And your joy is a folly as well as your grief.'—'You will not be M. de Lexergue's?'—'Very well, what then?'—'You will be mine.'—'Oh! to be sure, there is no medium; and every woman who will not be his wife will be yours; that is clear. Indeed you argue like a country poet. Go, see my uncle, and take care that he has no suspicion of the information that you have given me.'

'Well, is the epithalamium in forwardness?' said the Connoisseur to him, as soon as he came into his presence. 'I have the plan in my head.'—'Let us see!'—'I have taken the allegory of Time espousing Truth.'—'The thought is beautiful; but it is gloomy; and besides Time is very

old.'—'M. De Lexergue is an antiquary.'—'True; but we don't love to be told that we are as old as Time.'—'Would you like the nuptials of Venus and Vulcan better?'—'Vulcan? on account of bronzes and medals. No: the adventure of Mars is too disagreeable. You will find out, on consideration, some thought still more happy. But *à-propos*, of Vulcan, will you come this evening with us to see the essay of an artificer whom I protect? It is some Chinese rockets, of which I have given him the composition; I have even added something to it; for I must always put in something of my own.' Celicour doubted not but Agathe would be of the party, and repaired thither with eagerness.

The spectators were seated: Fintac and his niece took up one window, and there remained on Agathe's side a small space, which she had contrived to leave vacant. Celicour stole timorously into it, and leaped with joy on seeing himself so near Agathe. The uncle's eyes were attentive to follow the flight of the rockets; Celicour's were fixed upon the niece. The stars might have fallen from the heavens, and not have disturbed him. His hand met on the side of the window a hand softer than the down of flowers; a trembling seised him, which Agathe must have perceived. The hand he touched scarce made a motion to withdraw itself; his made one to retain it; Agathe's eyes turned upon him, and met his, which asked for pardon. She perceived that she should afflict him by withdrawing that dear hand; and whether through weakness or pity, she thought proper to leave it immoveable. This was a great deal, but not quite enough: Agathe's hand was shut, and Celicour's could not clasp it. Love inspired him with the courage to open it. Gods! what was his surprise and joy, when he found her yield insensibly to this soft violence! He holds Agathe's hand open in his, he presses it amorously; conceive his felicity! It

is not yet perfect: the hand he presses replies not to his; he draws it towards him, inclines towards her, and dares to rest it on his heart, which advances to meet it. It wants to get from him; he stops it, he holds it captive; and love knows with what rapidity his heart beats under this timid hand. This was as a loadstone to her. O triumph! O rapture! It is no longer Celicour that presses it; it is the hand itself that answers the beating of Celicour's heart. Those who have never loved have never known this emotion, and even those who have loved have never tasted it but once. Their looks were mingled with that touching languor, which is the sweetest of all declarations, when the branch of the fireworks displayed itself in the air. Then Agathe's hand made a new effort to impress itself on the heart of Celicour; and while around them they applauded the glittering beauty of the rockets, our lovers, taken up with themselves, expressed by burning sighs the regret of separation. Such was this dumb scene, worthy to be cited among the examples of eloquent silence.

From this moment their hearts understanding each other, there was no longer any secret between them: both tasted for the first time the pleasure of loving, and this blossom of sensibility is the purest essence of the soul. But love, which takes the complexion of characters, was timid and serious in Celicour; lively, joyous, and waggish in Agathe.

However, the day appointed for informing her of her marriage with M. de Lexergue arrives. The antiquary comes to see her, finds her alone, and makes her a declaration of his love, founded on the consent of her uncle. 'I know,' said she, rallying, 'that you love me in profile; but for me, I should like a husband that I could love in front; and to speak frankly, you are not the thing for me. You have, you say, my uncle's consent; but you shall not marry me without my own; and I believe I may assure you that you will not have it

as long as I live.' In vain did Lexergue protest to her that she united in her eyes more charms than the Venus de Medicis; Agathe wished him antique Venuses, and assured him that she was not one. 'You have your choice,' said she to him, 'to expose me to displease my uncle, or to spare me that chagrin. You will afflict me in charging me with the rupture, you will oblige me by taking it upon yourself; and the best thing we can do when we are not loved, is to endeavour not to be hated. And so your very humble servant.'

The antiquary was mortally offended at Agathe's refusal; but out of pride he would have concealed it, if the reproach cast upon him of failing in his word had not extorted the confession from him. Fintac, whose authority and consideration were now brought into question, was enraged at the opposition of his niece, and did all that was possible to conquer it; but he never could draw from her any other answer but that she was no medal; and he concluded by telling her, in his passion, that she should never have any other husband. This was not the only obstacle to the happiness of our lovers. Celicour could hope for only part of a small inheritance; and Agathe was entirely dependent on her uncle, who was now less than ever disposed to strip himself of his wealth for her. In happier times he might have taken upon him their little family affairs; but after this refusal of Agathe's, it required a little miracle to engage him to it, and it was Love himself that wrought it.

'Flatter my uncle,' said Agathe to Celicour; 'intoxicate him with encomiums, and carefully conceal from him our love. For that purpose let us diligently avoid being found together, and content yourself with informing me of your conduct *en passant*.' Fintac dissembled not to Celicour his resentment against his niece. 'Can she have,' said he, 'any secret inclination? If I knew it... But no, she is a little fool, who loves nothing, and

feels nothing. Ah! if she reckons upon my inheritance, she is mistaken: I know better how to dispose of my favours.' The young man, terrified at the menaces of the uncle, took the first opportunity to inform the niece of it. She only rallied on the occasion. 'He is raving mad against you, my dear Agathe.'—'That is quite indifferent to me.'—'He says he will disinherit you.'—'Say as he says; gain his confidence, and leave the rest to love and time.' Celicour followed Agathe's advice, and at every commendation that he bestowed on Fintac, Fintac thought he discovered in him a new degree of merit. 'The justness of understanding, the penetration of this young man is without example at his age,' said he to his friends. At last the confidence he placed in him was such, that he thought he could trust to him what he called the secret of his life: this was a dramatic piece which he had composed, and which he had not had the resolution to read to any one, for fear of risking his reputation. After demanding an inviolable secrecy, he appointed the time for reading it. At this news Agathe was transported with joy. 'That is well,' said she: 'courage; redouble the dose of incense; good or bad, in your eyes this piece has no equal.'

Fintac, *tête-à-tête* with the young man, after double-locking his study-door, drew out of a casket this precious manuscript, and read with enthusiasm the coldest, the most insipid comedy that ever was written. It cost the young man a great deal of mortification to applaud such flat stuff; but Agathe had recommended it to him. He applauded it therefore, and the Connoisseur was transported. 'Confess,' said he to him, after reading it, 'confess that this is fine.'—'Oh, very fine.'—'Very well; it is time to tell you then why I have chosen you for my only confident. I have burnt with desire this great while to see this piece on the stage, but I would not have it go under my name.' Celicour

trembled at these words. 'I was unwilling to trust any body; but in short, I think you worthy of this mark of my friendship: you shall present my work as your own; I will have nothing but the pleasure of the success, and I leave the glory of it to you.' The thought of imposing upon the public would alone have terrified the young man; but that of seeing appear, and being damned under his name, so contemptible a work, shocked him still more. Confounded at the proposal, he withstood it a long time; but his opposition was to no purpose. 'My secret being confided,' said Fintac, 'engages you in honour to grant me what I ask. It is indifferent to the public whether the piece be yours or mine, and this friendly imposition can hurt nobody. My piece is my treasure; I make you a present of it: the very remotest posterity will know nothing of it. Here then your delicacy is spared every way: if, after this, you refuse to present this work as your own, I shall think that you do not like it, that you only deceive me in praising it, and that you are equally unworthy of my friendship and esteem.' What would not Agathe's lover resolve upon rather than incur the hatred of her uncle? He assured him that he was only restrained by laudable motives, and asked twenty-four hours to determine. 'He has read it to me,' said he to Agathe. 'Well?'—'Well, it is execrable.'—'I thought so.'—'He wants me to bring it on the stage in my name.'—'What?'—'To have it pass for mine.'—'Ah, Celicour, Heaven be praised! Have you accepted it?'—'Not yet; but I shall be forced to it.'—'So much the better.'—'I tell you it is detestable.'—'So much the better.'—'It will be damned.'—'So much the better, I tell you; we must submit to every thing.' Celicour did not sleep that night for vexation; and the next day Celicour went to the uncle, and told him that there was nothing which he would not sooner resolve upon than to displease him. 'I

would not expose you rashly,' said the Connoisseur; 'copy out the piece with your own hand; you shall read it to our friends, who are excellent judges, and if they do not think the success infallible, you shall not be bound to any thing. I require only one thing of you; and that is to study it, in order to read it well.' This precaution gave the young man some hope. 'I am,' said he to Agathe, 'to read the piece to his friends; if they think it bad, he excuses me from bringing it out.'—'They will think it good, and so much the better; we should be undone if they were to dislike it.'—'Explain yourself.'—'Get you gone; they must not see us together.' What she had foreseen came to pass. The judges being assembled, the Connoisseur announced this piece as a prodigy, and especially in a young poet. The young poet read his best, and after Fintac's example, they were in ecstacies at every line, and applauded every scene. At the conclusion they clapped and hushed; they discovered in it the delicacy of Aristophanes, the elegance of Plautus, the comic force of Terence, and they knew no piece of Moliere fit to be set in competition with this. After this trial there was no room to hesitate. The players were not of the same opinion with the wits; for they knew beforehand that these good people had no taste; but there was an order to perform the piece. Agathe, who had assisted at the reading, had applauded it with all her might: there were even pathetic passages at which she appeared to be moved, and her enthusiasm for the work had a little reconciled her with the author. 'Could it be possible,' said Celicour to her, 'that you should have thought that good?'—'Excellent,' said she; 'excellent for us:' and at these words she left him. While the piece was in rehearsal, Fintac ran from house to house to dispose the wits in favour of a young poet of such great expectation. At last the great day arrives, and the Connoisseur assembles his friends to

dinner. 'Let us go, gentlemen,' said he, 'to support your own performance. You have judged the piece admirable; you have warranted the success, and your honour is concerned. As to me, you know how great my weakness is: I have the bowels of a father for all rising geniuses, and I feel in as lively a manner as themselves the uneasiness they suffer in those terrible moments.'

After dinner, the good friends of the Connoisseur tenderly embraced Celicour, and told him that they were going into the pit to be the witnesses rather than the instruments of his triumph. They repaired thither; the piece was played; it did not go through, and the first mark of impatience was given by these good friends.

Fintac was in the house, trembling and pale as death; but all the time that the play lasted, this unhappy and tender father made incredible efforts to encourage the spectators to succour his child. In short, he saw it expire, and then sinking beneath his grief, dragged himself to his coach, confounded, dejected, and murmuring against Heaven for having been born in so barbarous an age. And where was poor Celicour? Alas! they had granted him the honours of a latticed box; where, sitting on thorns, he had seen what they called his piece, tottering in the first act, stumbling in the second, and tumbling in the third. Fintac had promised to go and take him up, but had forgot it. What was now to become of him? how escape through that multitude who would not fail to know him again, and to point him out with the finger? At last, seeing the front of the house empty, he took courage and descended; but the stove-room, the galleries, the stairs were yet full: his consternation made him be taken notice of, and he heard on all sides, 'It is he without doubt; yes, there he is; that is he. Poor wretch! It is pity: he will do better another time.' He perceived in a corner a group of damned authors cracking jests on their companion. He

saw also the good friends of Fintac, who triumphed in his fall, and on seeing him turned their backs upon him. Overwhelmed with confusion and grief, he repaired to the true author's, and his first care was to ask for Agathe: he had entire liberty of seeing her, for her uncle had shut himself up in his closet. 'I forewarned you of it; it is fallen, and fallen shamefully,' said Celicour, throwing himself into a chair. 'So much the better!' said Agathe. 'What, so much the better! when your lover is covered with shame, and makes himself, in order to please you, the talk and ridicule of all Paris? Ah, it is too much. No, mademoiselle, it is no longer time to jest. I love you more than my life; but in the state of humiliation in which you now see me, I am capable of renouncing both life and yourself. I don't know how it has happened that the secret has not escaped me. It is but little to expose myself to the contempt of the public; your cruel uncle will abandon me! I know him, he will be the first to blush at seeing me again; and what I have done to obtain you, perhaps, cuts off my hope for ever. Let him prepare, however, to resume his piece, or to give me your hand. There is but one way to console me, and to oblige me to silence. Heaven is my witness, that if, through an impossibility, his work had succeeded, I should have given to him the honour of it: it is fallen, and I bear the shame; but it is an effort of love for which you alone can be the recompense.'—'It must be confessed,' said the wicked Agathe, in order to irritate him still more, 'that it is a cruel thing to see one's self hissed for another.'—'Cruel to such a degree, that I would not play such a part for my own father.' 'With what an air of contempt they see a wretch pass along whose play is damned!'—'The contempt is unjust, that is one comfort; but insolent pity, there is the mortification.'—'I suppose you were greatly confused in coming down stairs! Did you salute the ladies?'—

'I could have wished to annihilate myself.'—'Poor boy! and how will you dare to appear in the world again?'—'I will never appear again, I swear to you, but with the name of your husband, or till after I have retorted on M. de Fintac the humiliation of this failure.'—'You are resolved then to drive him to the wall?'—'Fully resolved? Do not doubt it. Let him determine this very evening. If he refuses me your hand, all the newspapers shall publish that he is the author of the damned piece.'—'And that is what I wanted,' said Agathe with triumph; 'there's the object of all those *so much the betters* which put you so much out of patience. Go to my uncle; hold firm, and be assured that we shall be happy.'

'Well, sir, and what say you to it?' demanded Celicour of the Connoisseur. 'I say, my friend, that the public is a stupid animal, and that we must renounce all labour for it. But console yourself: your work does you honour in the opinion of men of taste.'—'My work? it is all yours.'—'Talk lower, I beseech you, my dear lad; talk lower.'—'It is very easy for you to moderate yourself, sir; you who have prudently saved yourself from the fall of your piece; but I whom it crushes..'—'Ah! do not think that such a fall does you any injury. The more enlightened persons have discerned in this work strokes that proclaim genius.'—'No, sir, I do not flatter myself; the piece is bad: I have purchased the right of speaking of it with freedom, and all the world are of the same opinion. If it had succeeded, I should have declared that it was yours; if it had been but partly condemned, I should have taken it upon myself; but so thorough a damnation is above my strength, and I beg of you to take the burden upon yourself.'—'I, child! I, on my decline, incur this ridicule! To lose in one day a respect which is the work of forty years, and which forms the hope of my old age! would you have the cruelty to require

it?'—'Have not you the cruelty to render me the victim of my complaisance? You know how much it has cost me.'—'I know all that I owe to you; but, my dear Celicour, you are young, you have time enough to take your revenge, and there needs but one instance of success to make you forget this misfortune: in the name of friendship, support it with constancy, I conjure you with tears in my eyes.'—'I consent, sir; but I perceive too well the consequences of this first essay, to expose myself to the prejudice which it leaves behind it: I renounce the theatre, poetry, the belles-lettres.'—'Well, you are in the right: for a young man of your age there are many other objects of ambition.'—'There is but one for me, sir, and that depends on you.'—'Speak, there is no service which I would not do you: what do you require?'—'Your niece's hand.'—'Agathe's hand!'—'Yes, I adore her; and it was she who, to please you, made me consent to every thing that you desired.'—'My niece in the secret?'—'Yes, sir.'—'Ah! her giddiness will perhaps.... Hola! somebody: run to my niece, and bid her come here.'—'Compose yourself: Agathe is less a child, less giddy than she appears.'—'Ah! you make me tremble... My dear Agathe, you know what has passed, and the misfortune which has just happened.'—'Yes, uncle.'—'Have you revealed this fatal secret to any one?'—'To nobody in the world.'—'Can I thoroughly depend upon it?'—'Yes, I swear to you.'—'Well then, my children, let it die with us three: I ask it of you as I would ask my life. Agathe, Celicour loves you: he renounces, out of friendship to me, the theatre, poetry, letters, and I owe him your hand as the price of so great a sacrifice.'—'He is too well paid,' cried Celicour, seizing Agathe's hand. 'I marry an unsuccessful author!' said she, smiling; 'but I engage to console him for his misfortune. The worst of the matter is, that they deny him wit, and so many

honest people are contented without it! And now, my dear uncle, while Celicour renounces the glory of being a poet, had not you as well renounce that of being a Connoisseur? You will be a great deal the easier.' Agathe was interrupted by the arrival of Clement, the faithful valet of her uncle. 'Ah, sir!' said he, quite out of breath, 'your friends! your good friends!'—'Well, Clement?'—'I was in the pit; they were all there.'—'I know it. Did they applaud?'—'Applaud! the traitors! If you had seen with what fury they mangled this unfortunate young man. I beg, sir, you would discharge me, if such people are ever to enter your house again.'—'Ah, the rascals! scoundrels!' said Fintac. 'Yes, it is done; I will burn my books, and break off all commerce with these men of letters.'—'Keep your books for your amusement,' said Agathe, embracing her uncle; 'and with respect to men of letters, wish to have none but your friends, and you will find some worthy of esteem.'

THE SCHOOL OF FATHERS.

THE misfortune incident to a father employed in raising a fortune for his children is not to be able to watch himself over their education, a point of still more consequence than their fortune. The young Timantes, called M. de Volny, had received from nature an agreeable figure, an easy temper, a good heart; but thanks to the cares of the good lady his mother, this happy disposition was soon spoiled, and the most agreeable child in the world at six years old, became a little coxcomb at fifteen. They gave him all the frivolous accomplishments, and not one of the useful: useful knowledge might be well enough for a man like his father, who had been obliged to labour to enrich himself: but he who found his fortune made, need only know how to enjoy it nobly. They had laid it down to him as a maxim, that he was never to live with his equals; accordingly he saw none but young people, who, being superior to him in birth, pardoned his being richer than they, provided he paid for their pleasures. His father would not have had the complaisance to furnish supplies to his liberalities; but his mother did honour to them all. She was not ignorant that at the age of nineteen, he had, according to the genteel custom, a little house and a handsome mistress: one should pass over some things in him: she required only that he should observe a little secrecy, for fear that Timantes, who did not *know the world*, should take it ill that his son amused himself. If in the intervals of his labour the father showed any uneasiness on account of the dissipated life which this young man led, the mother was at hand to justify him, and complaisant falsehoods were never wanting on occasion. Timantes had

the pleasure to hear it said, that nobody at the ball had danced like his son. 'It is a great comfort,' said the good man, 'to have given one's-self so much trouble for a son who dances well.' He did not conceive the necessity of this little signior's having lacqueys so finely dressed, and such a brilliant equipage; but his good lady-wife represented to him, that respect depended on it, and that in order to succeed in the world, one must be on a certain footing. If he asked why his son came home so late, 'It was,' she told him, 'because women of quality do not go to bed sooner.' He did not think these reasons very good; but for the sake of peace, he was obliged to be contented with them. However, his son gave a loose to himself in the dissipations of his age, till love seemed to take pity of him, and to undertake his reformation.

His sister Lucy had had, for some little time past, in her convent, a charming companion. Angelica had lost her mother; and being too young to keep house, she had prevailed upon her father to dispense with her, till he should dispose of her hand.

Conformity of age and condition, and, still more, that of tempers, soon united Angelica and Lucy. The latter, on wiping away the tears of her companion, appeared so sensible of her loss, that Angelica no longer observed any reserve in the effusion of her grief. 'I have lost,' said she to her, 'the best mother that ever lived. Since I have had the use of my reason, I have found in her a friend, and a friend so intimate, that if my heart and her virtues had not continually recalled to my mind the respect which I owed her, her familiarity would have made me forget it. She always disguised her instructions under an air of merriment; and what instructions, my dear Lucy! those of wisdom itself. With what strokes was this world, in which I was to live, painted to my astonished eyes! What charms did she give to the pure and modest manners of which she was a living example!

Ah, under her enchanting pencil all the virtues became graces.' Thus did this amiable daughter, speaking of her mother, continually mingle with the most tender regret the most touching eulogies; but her understanding and her soul praised still more worthily the person who had formed them. If any one about her wanted those comforts which affluence bestows, Angelica deprived herself of them with joy: the sacrifice cost her only the trouble of concealing them, and the want of obliging was the only want she knew. 'Do you think like me?' said she sometimes to Lucy. 'Being more happy than our companions, that inequality mortifies me, and I blush for Fortune, who has distributed her gifts so ill. If any thing makes the unhappy amends, it is that they are pitied and beloved; whereas to us, whom they might envy, they make it a favour if they do not hate us. We ought therefore to be very attentive to make our companions forget, by beneficence and modesty, this dangerous advantage which we have over them.'

Lucy, charmed with the disposition of Angelica, could have wished to attach herself to her by all the bands of affection. 'My dear friend,' said she to her one day, 'we touch perhaps on the moment when we may be separated for ever: this reflection is the sole unhappiness of my life; but I have one, if you did but approve of it .... I want to show you my brother: he is beautiful as the day, a very picture, and well accomplished.'—'He is very young,' said Angelica, 'and very much in the world for his age! I am afraid your mother has been too fond of him.'

Volny being come to see Lucy, she prevailed upon her friend to accompany her to the parlour. 'Ah, my sister, what charms!' cried the young coxcomb. 'Never was so much beauty: what features, what a figure, what eyes! You in a convent, mademoiselle! It is robbery, treason.'—'I foresaw,' said Lucy, 'that you would be transport-

ed: and yet her soul is a thousand times more beautiful.'—'Sister, she has the look of the Marchioness of Alcine, whom I handed yesterday out of the opera. They cry up the figure of the Countess of Flavell, whom I am to sup with this evening; but there is no comparison between her person and this lady's; and though I am the intimate friend of the young Madam de Blane, who passes for the beauty of the day, I will lay a thousand to one that your friend will eclipse her when she comes out into the world.'

While Volny spoke thus, Angelica viewed him with eyes of pity. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'you can have no doubt but your praises are insults. For, know, that the first sentiment that a virtuous woman ought to inspire, is the fear of wounding her modesty, and that it is not permitted to praise without reserve any but persons without shame.'—'There are transports of surprise which we cannot master,' replied Volny, a little confused. 'When respect accompanies them, it prevents them from breaking out. But I see that I afflict my friend in appearing offended with your address to me: I will console her, and put you at your ease. Beautiful or not, I am so little vain of an endowment with which we are often very contemptible, that I give you leave to say whatever you please before me: I will not have the vanity to blush at your praises.'—'One must be well accustomed,' said Volny, 'to be beautiful, and greatly superior to that advantage, to speak of it with so much negligence. As for me, I cannot persuade myself that beauty is so contemptible: but since you take the homages that are paid it so ill, we must adore it in silence.' From that moment he talked of nothing but himself, his horses, his friends, his suppers, and his intrigues. Lucy, who had her eyes on Angelica, saw with grief that all this prejudiced Volny in her opinion.

'It is pity,' said Angelica, when he was with-

drawn, 'it is a great pity that they have spoiled him so early!'—'Confess, however,' said Lucy, 'that he is made up of graces.'—'And of follies, my dear friend.'—'He will correct them.'—'No, for that absurdity succeeds at his age, and we are never disposed to correct ourselves of a fault which pleases.'—'But he has seen you, he will love you; and if he loves you, he will become wise.'—'You do not doubt that I wish it; but I am far from hoping it.'

Volny did not doubt that he had made a complete conquest. 'My sister was right,' said he; 'her friend is handsome! a little singular; but her disposition is only the more lively for it. The only thing wanting in her is birth: my mother will have me marry some young woman of quality. Let us visit her, however; this girl resembles nothing that we have in the great world, and she has at least sufficient charms to amuse one.'

He went therefore to see his sister again, and with her he again saw Angelica. 'What have I done to you,' said he to Lucy, 'that you have disturbed my repose? I was so easy! I amused myself so cleverly before I saw your dangerous friend! Ah, mademoiselle, how insipid is the world, and its amusements how cold to a heart taken up with you! Who would have told me that I should have been jealous of my sister? Mixed with the most brilliant company, solicited by all the pleasures, who could believe it? Yes, I wish to be in her place; she sees you continually, tells you that she loves you, and hears you say that you love her.'—'You have reason to envy my happiness; but, Volny, if you pleased, yours would be still more deserving of envy.'—(At these words Angelica blushed.) 'O heaven! sister! what do I hear?'—'I have said too much.'—'No, my dear Lucy: in virtuous sentiments there is nothing to be concealed. Your sister wishes that Heaven may have destined us for each other, and I cannot but be

obliged to her. Nay, more: I flatter myself with being born to make a good man happy, and you *might* be such a man as my husband ought to be; you need only resemble your sister.'—'If that be all, I am happy: for they flatter me that I am very like her.'—'True, they flatter you: but I, who never flatter, assure you it is no such thing. My Lucy is not vain either of the graces of her understanding, or her figure.'—'Ah, I protest now that nobody in the world is less vain than I, and if I have merit, I know nothing of it.'—'Nothing is more simple than Lucy's manners: she is Nature itself in all her candour. See if in her behaviour, her language, her gesture, there is any thing affected, any thing studied.'—'She is like me: for the sake of avoiding affectation I often fall into negligence; I am told of it every day.'—'Lucy makes no pretensions to any thing: wholly taken up with the recommendation of others, herself is the only person she forgets.'—'And I, whatever talents nature may have given me, do they see me vain of them, or presume upon them? All the world says, that I excel in every circumstance of the agreeable; I alone never mention it. Ah, if it be modesty and simplicity which you love in my sister, I am very sure that you will love me: they are my favourite virtues.'—'Would they were!' said Angelica; 'however, if you have any design of ever pleasing me, I advise you to examine yourself more closely.'

'You have given him,' said Lucy, 'a lesson which he will not forget.'—'No, for he has forgot it already.' Angelica was in the right. All that he had drawn from their conversation was, that she liked him, and that she would be very glad to be his wife. 'With what frankness,' said he, 'did she make the declaration to me! How well that candour becomes beauty!' Whether vanity or passion, he was really moved by it; but this growing passion, if it was one, had no effect upon his man-

ners. Intoxicated with the incense of his flatterers, agreeably deceived by a young enchantress, he forgot that they sold him the pains which they took to please him, and his vanity, caressed by the pleasures, smiled carelessly upon them. This voluptuous softness is the most fatal languor into which a young man can be plunged. Every thing, except that, is painful to him; the lightest duties are fatiguing; decorums the least austere, dull and troublesome; he is not at his ease, but in that state of indolence and liberty where every thing obeys him, nothing constrains him.

Sometimes the image of Angelica presented itself to him, like a dream. 'She is charming,' said he; 'but what shall I do with her? Nothing is more inconvenient than a delicate and faithful wife to a husband who is not so. My father would expect that I should live only for my wife. There will be love, jealousy, reproaches, tears; horrible! however, I will see her again.'

Lucy came alone this time. 'Well, how does she like me?'—'A great deal too well.'—'I thought so.'—'Too well as to figure. That advantage makes you neglect, she says, more amiable qualities, which you would stand in need of without it.'—'This Angelica of yours moralises a little, and 'tis a pity. Tell her that nothing is more dull, and that so pretty a mouth as hers is not made to talk reason.'—'It is not she,' said Lucy, 'it is you whom I would correct.'—'And of what, pray? of loving pleasure, and every thing that inspires it?'—'Pleasure! is there one more pure than that of possessing the heart of a virtuous and beautiful woman, of loving, and of being loved? I believe that you are affectionate. Angelica has sensibility; every thing that belongs to me is dear to her: but . . . . . .'—'But she is very difficult, and what is it she requires?'—'Morals.'—'Morals at my age! and who has told her that I have none?'—'I don't know, but she has conceived a prejudice against

you that grieves me.'—'Ah! I will bring her to herself again. Bring her to me, sister, bring her to me the first time I come to see you. It is to no purpose that men are discreet,' said he, as he was going away; 'women cannot be silent; and with whatever care I conceal my intrigues, the secret will out. But what hurt does that do me? If Angelica will have a husband who has always been chaste, she has nothing to do but to marry a fool or a child. Am I obliged to be faithful to a wife that is to be? Oh! I will make her see the folly of her notions.' She appeared, and he was himself very much humbled, very much confounded, when he heard her speak with the eloquence of virtue and reason on the shame and danger of vice. 'Can you think, sir,' said she to him, after having let him treat as slightly as he pleased the principles of good morals; 'can you think, without blushing, on the union of a pure and chaste soul with one tarnished and profaned by the most unworthy of all inclinations? Of what value in your eyes would a heart be, debased by the vices of which you are vain? and do you think us less sensible than yourself to the charms of virtue, modesty, and innocence? You have given yourself a dispensation from those laws which you have imposed upon us; but nature and reason are more equitable than you. For me, I will never believe that a man can dare to love me while he loves things that are scandalous; and if he has had the misfortune to be unworthy of me, before knowing me, it is by the pains he shall take to wipe away that blemish that I shall see whether I ought to forget it.' Volny wanted to make her understand, that by changing condition we changed our conduct; that love, virtue, beauty, had numberless rights over a soul; and that the frivolous and transient pleasures which had before occupied that indolent soul would disappear before an object more dear, and more worthy to possess it. 'Have you faith, sir,' said she, 'in these sud-

den revolutions? Do you know that they suppose a soul naturally delicate and noble? that there are very few of this temper; and that it is not a good presage of the change which you promise, to wait, in the very bosom of vice, the moment of becoming virtuous all on a sudden?'

Volny, surprised and confounded at this serious language, contented himself with telling her that in all this he flattered himself there was nothing personal. 'Pardon me,' said Angelica, 'I have heard much talk of you. I am besides pretty well acquainted with the way of life of the young men of fashion: you are rich, of very extensive acquaintance, and, unless by a kind of prodigy, you must be more irregular than another. But the opinion which I have of you ought not to discourage you. You think you love me: I wish it: that perhaps will give you resolution and force to become a valuable man. You have a fine example, a father, who, without all the accomplishments which you are set off with, has acquired, by talents useful to his country and himself, the highest reputation. There now is what I call an uncommon man; and when you shall become worthy of him, I shall be proud of being worthy of you.'

This discourse had thrown Volny into serious reflections; but his friends came to draw him out of them. He was expected at a delicious supper, at which Fatime, Doris, and Cloe were to assist. Their merriment was lively and brilliant, and if Volny's heart did not give itself up to it, at least his senses did.

We may easily judge that in this polite circle a serious engagement passed for the highest extravagance. 'When a person's fortune is concerned,' said they, 'it is time enough, we resolve on it; but can a young man, born to a great fortune, can such a one be fool enough, or mad enough, to forge himself a chain? If he does not love his wife, she is a burden which he wantonly imposes upon him-

self; and if he loves her, what a sad method of pleasing himself is that of being her husband! Is there in all the world a more ridiculous creature than a loving husband? Suppose also that this should succeed, what then? They are pleased for six months, to be dull all their lives. Ah! my dear Volny, no marriage: you would be a lost man. If you have a fancy for any honest girl, wait till another marries her; they always come round to us sooner or later, and you will be happy in your turn.' Would one believe that this unthinking young man thought these reflections very wise? 'And yet only see,' said he, 'what empire virtue and beauty have over a soul, since they make it forget the care of its repose, and the value of its liberty.'

He would fain not have seen Angelica again; but he was not well with himself, when he had passed a few days without seeing her. Such nevertheless is the attraction of libertinism, that on quitting that adorable young lady, penetrated, ravished, enchanted with her wisdom and her charms, he plunged himself again into the dissipation of which she had made him ashamed.

Is it possible that it can be a happiness to a son to lose his mother? Volny, at the death of his, thought he saw the source of all his foolish expenses dried up; but it did not even come into his head to renounce those things which had engaged him in them, and the only care with which he was taken up, was to supply the means which he had lost to support them. Being the only son of so rich a father, he could not fail to be rich in his turn; and a young man finds at Paris a pernicious facility of anticipating his fortune. Timantes, now on his decline, wanted to repose himself from his long fatigues, and to engage his son to take his place. 'Sir,' said the young man to him, 'I do not think myself born for that.'—'Well, my son, would you rather take the profession of arms?'—

'My inclination is not that way, and my birth does not oblige me to it.'—'The law, without doubt, pleases you better?'—'Oh! not at all; I have an invincible aversion for the law.'—'What will you be then?'—'My mother had views of an office which confers nobility, which requires no duty, and might be discharged at Paris.'—'I understand you, my son; I will think of it: an excellent vocation! Oh, I see,' said the good man in himself, 'that you would live an idle life; but I will hinder you, if I can. An office which confers nobility, and requires no duty! very convenient. And why should I still wear myself out with labour and inquietude? Let me repose; let me have no other care than that which I have taken up rather too late, the care of observing the conduct of a son who promises me nothing but sorrow; for he who loves idleness, loves the vices of which idleness is the mother.'

But what was the affliction of Timantes when he learnt that his son, intoxicated with pride, and plunged in libertinism, gave into all kinds of irregularities; that he had mistresses and flatterers; that he gave shows and entertainments, and that he played at a rate sufficient to ruin him? 'It is my fault,' said Timantes, 'and I must repair it; but how? The habit is contracted: the relish for vice has made great progress. Shall I constrain this young man? he will escape me. Shall I disavow his expenses and debts? that would be dishonouring myself, it would be extinguishing in his abased soul the very seeds of honesty. To shut him up is still worse: thank Heaven, he is not come to that pass as to merit that the laws should deprive him of the natural right of freedom, and there are none but unnatural parents who would be severer towards their children than the laws. In the mean time he is running on to his ruin; what shall I do to draw him from the precipice on which I see him? Let us go back to the source of the evil. My riches have turned his head: born of a father without

fortune, he had been like another, modest, laborious, and prudent; the remedy is easy, and my course is taken.'

Timantes began from that time to settle his wealth in such a manner as that it should be detached, independent, and free. Excepting his estate of Volny, and his town-house, his fortune was all in his portfolio, and he took care to adjust matters with all his correspondents. Things being thus disposed, he returns home one day in consternation. His son and his friends, who waited his coming to seat themselves at table, were struck with his dejection. One of them could not refrain from asking him the cause: 'You shall know it,' said he; 'let us make a little haste, if you please, to dine: I am taken up with serious affairs.' They dined in profound silence, and Timantes, at their getting up from table, having taken leave of his guests, shut himself up with his son. 'Volny,' said he to him, 'I have bad news to tell you, but you must support your misfortune with courage. My child, I am ruined. Two-thirds of my fortune are just taken on board two vessels, and the dishonesty of a person whom I trusted has deprived me of half the rest. The desire of leaving you a large fortune has undone me; happily I owe but little, and out of the remains of my fortune I shall save my estate of Volny, which is worth twenty thousand livres a year: on that we shall be able to live. It is a terrible blow; but you are young, and you may rise under it. I have not rendered myself unworthy the confidence of my correspondents; my name will perhaps still retain some credit in Europe; but I am too old to begin anew; and you must repair the misfortunes of your father. I set out in greater difficulties than you will do, and with probity, labour, and my instructions, it is easy for you to go farther than I have done.'

The situation of a traveller, at whose feet the thunder has just fallen, is not to be compared to

that of Volny. 'What, my father, ruined without resource?'—'You, my son, are the only resource left me, and I have no longer any hope but in you. Go, consult yourself, and leave me to take the measures suitable to our misfortune.'

The news was soon made public. The house at Paris was let; the equipages sold: a plain coach, a decent lodging, a frugal table, a family of servants suitable to the necessities of a prudent way of living; every thing proclaimed this reverse of fortune, and it is unnecessary to say that the number of Timantes' friends diminished considerably.

Those of Volny were touched with his accident. 'What is the matter?' said one: 'they tell me your father is ruined?'—'It is too true.'—'What a folly! You have your little box then no longer?'—'Alas! no.'—'I am very sorry for it; I reckoned to have gone there to supper to-morrow.' Another accosted him, and said, 'Tell me a little how this is; your fortune is entirely ruined?'—'It is at least reduced to a very small matter.'—'You have a very silly father of your own! Why the devil did he meddle? You would have been ruined yourself well enough without him.'—'I am quite distracted,' said a third; 'they tell me that you have sold your fine horses?'—'Alas! yes.'—'If I had known it, I would have bought them. What a fellow you are! you never think of your friends.'—'I was taken up with more serious affairs.'—'With your little mistress, was not it? You will have her no longer on your own account; but you will always be good friends: take comfort. I know she loves you; she will behave well.' Some of them said to him as they went along, 'Adieu, Volny;' and all the rest shunned him.

As to his mistress whom he had enriched, she was so afflicted that she had not the courage to see him again. 'Spare me,' writ she to him: 'you know my sensibility; the sight of you would make too grievous an impression on me. I find myself

unable to support it.' It was then, his soul pierced both by the cold slights of his friends, and the unworthy desertion of his mistress, that Volny for the first time saw the veil fall which he had over his eyes. 'Where have I been?' said he: 'what have I done? how was I going to spend my life? Ah! what reproaches have I not merited! what wrongs have I not to repair! Let me go and see my sister,' added he: for he had not the courage to say, 'Let me go and see Angelica.'

Lucy was overwhelmed with the news which her father had just told her. 'It is not for myself,' said she. 'I am content; and to be happy far from the world, but little is necessary: but you, my father, but Volny!'—'What would you have, daughter? I was not born in the opulence wherein I have seen myself. If my son is prudent, he will still have riches enough; if not, he will have too much.' Lucy's grief redoubled on seeing her brother. 'I have not the courage to console you,' said she, 'but I go to call to my assistance our wise and affectionate Angelica.'—'Oh no, sister, I have not deserved her interesting herself in my sorrow: when I might have done her honour by sacrifices, it was then that I should have rendered myself worthy of her esteem and pity: now that every one abandons me, my return, though humiliating to me, has nothing flattering in it for her.' While he was speaking thus, Angelica came of her own accord, and with the most touching air testified to him all her sensibility for his loss. 'It is a great misfortune for your father,' added she, 'it is so too for this dear girl; but it is perhaps a happiness for you. It would be cruel to afflict you by reproaches, when we owe you consolations; but you may draw from the loss of your wealth blessings more valuable than that wealth itself.'—'I abused it, Heaven punishes me for it, but punishes me too cruelly in depriving me of the hope of being hers whom I love. I was young; and I dare believe

that without this desperate lesson, time, love, and reason, would have rendered me less unworthy of you.'—'I see you dejected,' said she to him: 'it is no longer from presumption, it is from despondency that we must preserve you; and what it would have been dangerous to confess to you in prosperity, you stand in need of knowing in adversity. Whether it was not possible for me to think ill of the brother of my friend, or whether it was that you yourself had inspired me with that prepossession which does not listen to reason, I thought I discerned in you, amidst all the errors and vices of your age, a disposition at bottom naturally good. Happily your past errors have nothing shameful in the eyes of the world: the path of honour and virtue is open to you, and it is more easy for you than ever to become such as I wish. As to fortune, the reverse which you have experienced is overwhelming; I shall not make you a panegyric upon mediocrity: when we have known ourselves rich, it is humiliating, it is hard to cease to be so; but the evil is not without remedy. Conform yourself to your present situation: emerge out of that indolent softness in which you have been plunged: let the love of labour take place of the taste for dissipation; do all that depends on yourself, if you love me, in order to re-establish between us that equality of fortune required in marriage. My father, who loves me, and who would not have me unhappy, will allow me, I hope, the liberty of waiting for you. If in six years your fortune is re-established, or on the point of being re-established, all the obstacles will be smoothed; if with prudence, frugality, and labour, you have the misfortune not to succeed, I require then of you, in the room of all riches, only to have consideration of your condition: I am an only daughter, very rich myself; I will cast myself at my father's feet, and obtain his permission to indemnify a valuable man for the injustice of fortune.' Lucy could no longer refrain

from embracing Angelica: 'Ah, how justly art thou named!' said she to her. 'There is nothing but a heavenly spirit that could be capable of so much virtue.' Volny, on his side, in the tenderness and respect with which he was seized, applied his mouth, as he threw himself down, on the bar of the grate which Angelica's hand had touched. 'Mademoiselle,' said he to her, 'you render my misfortune dear to me, and I am going to employ my whole life to merit, if it be possible, the favours with which you overwhelm me. Permit me to come often to derive from you the courage, the prudence, and the virtue which I have need of in order to deserve you.'

He retired, not such as heretofore, vain, and full of himself; but humbled, confounded at having so little known the value of the most noble heart that Heaven had ever formed. He enters his father's closet. 'Your fortune is changed,' said he, 'but your son is still more so: and I hope that one day you will bless Heaven for the reverse which restores me to my duty, and to myself. Condescend to instruct and to direct me: diligent, laborious, and docile, I am going to be the support and consolation of your old age, and you may dispose of me.' The good man, transported, dissembled his joy, and contented himself with commending such good dispositions. He presented his son to his correspondents, and demanded in his behalf their friendship and confidence. We pity, above all, unfortunate persons whom we esteem, and each of them, touched with the misfortune of this gallant man, made it a point to console him.

Volny, who resumed the name of Timantes, had but few difficulties to encounter in his first operations: his dexterity, which at first was purely his father's, but which soon after became actually his own, made his credit visibly increase. The moments of relaxation which his father obliged him to take he passed with Angelica, and he felt a sensi-

ble pleasure in telling her his progress. Angelica, who attributed partly to herself the wonderful change in her lover, enjoyed her own influence with the double satisfaction of love and friendship. Lucy was in adoration of her, and ceased not to give her thanks for the happiness which she had procured them.

One day that her father came to see her, and testified his satisfaction at the consolation which his son gave him, 'Do you know,' said Lucy, 'to whom we are indebted for this reformation? to the most beautiful and most virtuous person breathing, to the only daughter of Alcimon, my companion and friend.' She then related to him all that had passed. 'You melt me,' said the good man; 'I must know this charming girl.' Angelica came, and received the commendations of Timantes with a modesty which still heightened her beauty. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'I depend on a father; but it is true, that if he has the goodness to allow me to dispose of myself, and that you are satisfied with your son, I shall take a pride in becoming your daughter. My friendship for Lucy inspired me with the first desire of it, my respect for yourself still adds to it; your very misfortunes have only made me interest myself more in every thing that could make you amends for them; and if the conduct of your son is such as you wish, and I desire, whether he be rich or not, the most honourable and the most agreeable use I can make of my fortune is to share it with him.' At this discourse the old man was very near letting his secret escape him: but he had the prudence to contain himself. 'I did not think, madam,' said he, 'that it was possible to increase, in the soul of a father, the desire of seeing his son a wise and virtuous man; but you add a new interest to that of paternal love: I don't know what Heaven will do with us, but in all the situations of life, and till my last breath, be assured of my gratitude.'

'That you should not have confided to me,' said he, on seeing his son again, 'the follies of your youth, I am but little surprised, and I pardon you for it; but why conceal from me a virtuous inclination? why not confess to your father your love for Angelica, the daughter of my old friend?'—'Alas,' said the young man, 'have you not misfortunes enough of your own, without afflicting you with my sorrows? and who has revealed my secret to you?'—'Your sister, Angelica herself; I am charmed with her, I am in love with her, and I wish she was my daughter.'—'Ah, I wish so too! but how superior is her fortune to mine!'—'In time you may come near it. Visit this lovely girl often.'—'I visit only her, and I have no other ambition in the world than to be worthy of her and of you.'

Timantes felt an inexpressible satisfaction at seeing daily the success of the trial which he had put him to. He had the firmness to let him apply himself for five whole years, without relaxation, to the re-establishing of his fortune; detached from the world, and dividing his life between his compting-house and Angelica's parlour. At length seeing his reformation become habit, and all the old seeds of vice extirpated, he went to visit Alcimon. 'My old friend,' said he, 'you have, they tell me, a charming daughter: I come to propose for her an agreeable partner in point of condition, and advantageous in point of fortune.'—'I am obliged to you,' said Alcimon; 'but I tell you beforehand that I would have a person of the same condition with myself, and who would take a pride in calling me his father: I have not laboured all my life to give my daughter a husband who may be ashamed of me.'—'The person I propose,' said Timantes, 'is precisely such a one as you like. He is rich, he is honest, he will always respect you.'—'What is he?'—'I cannot tell you but at my own house, where I invite you to come and renew, over a

bottle, a friendship of forty years. Do me the favour to bring Angelica there. My daughter, who is her companion in the convent, shall have the honour of accompanying her; you shall both of you see the young man who demands her, and to put you more at your ease, he shall not know himself that I have spoke to you about him.' The day appointed, Alcimon and Timantes go and fetch Angelica and Lucy; they arrive, they prepare to sit down at table, they send word to the son, who, busied in his office, expected nothing less than the happiness which was preparing for him. He enters; what is his surprise! Angelica there! Angelica with her father! What was he to think, what to hope from this unforeseen rendezvous? Why had they made a secret of it to him? Every thing seems to proclaim his happiness to him, but his happiness is not probable. In this confusion of thoughts he lost the use of his senses. A sudden giddiness spread a cloud over his eyes; he wanted to speak, his voice failed him, and a low bow alone expressed to the father and the daughter how much he was moved with the honour his father and he received. His sister, who came to throw herself into his arms, gave him time to recover from his confusion. Never was embrace so tender. He thought he held in his bosom Angelica with Lucy, and he could not separate himself from her.

At table Timantes displayed an alacrity at which all the company were surprised. Alcimon, prepossessed with the demand which he had made him, and impatient to see the young man whom he proposed arrive, freely gave himself up to the pleasure of finding himself again with his old friend; he had even the kindness to enter into conversation with the young Timantes. 'I see,' said he to him, 'that you are the comfort of your father. People talk of your application to business and your talents with great commendations; and such is the advantage of your condition, that a sensible

and honest man cannot fail of success.'—'Ah, my friend,' replied the old Timantes, 'it requires a great deal of time to make one's fortune, and very little to ruin it! What a pity not to have mine to offer you! Instead of proposing to you a stranger as a husband to this amiable young lady, I should have solicited that happiness for my son.'—'I should have preferred him to every body else,' said Alcimon. 'Indeed!'—'Ay, indeed. But you know where one is liable to have a numerous family, there should be wherewithal to support it.'—'If it depends only on that,' said Timantes, 'the case is not desperate, and we may come to an agreement.' On saying these words he rose from table, and returning the moment after, 'There,' said he, 'see there is my portfolio: it is yet pretty well furnished;' and observing Alcimon's surprise, 'know,' added he, 'that my ruin is all a fiction. This young man had been spoiled by the notion that he was born rich: I knew no better method to reform him than to make him believe that I was ruined. This feint has succeeded: he is now in a good way: I am even certain that he has no desire to relapse again into the errors of his youth, and it is time to trust to him. Yes, my son, I have all the wealth I had, augmented by five years' savings and the fruit of your labour. It is for him, therefore,' said he to his friend, 'that I demand Angelica; and if there be occasion for any new motive to engage you to grant her to me, I will confess to you that he has seen her at the convent, that he has conceived for her the most tender love, and that this love has done more than ill fortune itself towards attaching him to his duties.' While Timantes did but sound the disposition of Angelica's father, she herself, her friend, and her lover, had felt only the emotion and anxiety of hope and fear; but at sight of the portfolio, at the news that Timantes's ruin was but a feint, at the demand which he made himself of Angelica's hand for his son, Lucy, all

wild and beside herself, flew into the arms of her father; the young Timantes, still more confused, fell at Alcimon's knees; and Angelica, her countenance overspread with paleness, had not the power to lift up her eyes. Alcimon raised the young man with his embraces, and turning towards the old Timantes, 'My friend,' said he to him, 'when we would contrive an agreeable surprise, we must take instruction from you. Come, you are a good father; and your son deserves to be happy.'

THE SYLPH-HUSBAND.

'AVOID the snares of men,' we are perpetually saying to young women: 'Avoid the seductions of women,' we are perpetually saying to young men. Do we think we are following the plan of nature, by making one sex the enemy of the other? Are they formed only to hurt each other? Are they destined to fly one another? And what would be the fruits of these lessons, if both sexes should take them literally?

When Elisa quitted the convent to go to the altar to espouse the Marquis de Volange, she was thoroughly persuaded that, next to a lover, the most dangerous being in nature was a husband. Brought up by one of those recluse devotees, whose melancholy imagination paints to itself all objects in black, she saw nothing for her in the world but rocks, and nothing but snares in marriage. Her soul, naturally delicate and timid, was immediately blasted by fear; and age had not yet given to her senses the happy power of conquering the ascendant of opinion. Thus every thing in marriage was to her humiliating and painful. The first assiduities of her husband, far from encouraging her, alarmed her the more. 'It is thus,' said she, 'that the men cover with flowers the chains of our slavery. Flattery crowns the victim; pride soon prepares to sacrifice it. He consults my desires now, in order to oppose them eternally hereafter. He would penetrate into my heart, in order to unfold all its recesses; and if he discovers any foible in me, it is by that very foible that he will take care to humble me with more advantage. Let us guard ourselves well against the snares which they spread for us!'

It is easy to foresee the bitterness and coldness which this unhappy prejudice created on the side of Elisa, in their most intimate commerce. Volange perceived the repugnance which she had for him. He would have endeavoured to have conquered it had he guessed the cause; but the persuasion that he was hated, discouraged him; and, in losing the hope of pleasing, it was natural enough for him to lose the endeavour.

His situation was the more painful, as it was quite opposite to his character. Volange was gaiety, gallantry, complaisance itself. He had considered his marriage as a jolly festival, rather than a serious affair. He had taken a wife young and handsome, as we choose a divinity, in order to raise altars to her. 'The world will adore her,' said he; 'I shall lead her thither in triumph. I shall have a thousand rivals: so much the better! I shall eclipse them all by my assiduities, my vows, and my homages; and the inquietude ever attached to a jealousy, delicate and timid, shall preserve the love of Elisa from the negligences of the husband.'

The impatient and disdainful coldness of his wife destroyed this illusion. The more he was in love with her, the more he was hurt by the distance which she observed towards him; and that love, so tender and pure, which would have formed his happiness, was likely to be his torment. But an innocent artifice, of which chance gave him the first idea, re-established him in all his rights.

The sensibility of the soul must exert itself; and if it has not a real object, it creates a fantastic one. Elisa's repugnance was founded in a settled notion, that there was nothing in nature worthy to attach her. But she had found in fiction something to engage, to move, to melt her. The fable of the Sylphs was in vogue.—Some of those romances, in which is represented the delicious commerce of those spirits with mortals, had fallen into her hands;

and these brilliant chimeras had in her eyes all the charms of truth.

In short, Elisa believed in sylphs, and burnt with the desire of having one. We must be able at least to form to ourselves some notion of what we desire: and it is not easy to form a notion of a spirit. Elisa had been obliged to attribute all the features of a man to the sylph which she desired. But for the mansion of a celestial soul, she had composed a body at pleasure: a shape, elegant and noble; a figure, animated, interesting, ingenious; a complexion, of a bloom and freshness worthy of the sylph that presides over the morning star; eyes fine, blue, and languishing; and I know not what of aerial in all the graces of his person. To all this she had super-added a vesture, the lightest imaginable, formed of ribands, colours the most tender, a tissue of silk, almost transparent, in which the zephyrs sported; two wings like those of Cupid, of whom this beautiful sylph was the image; such was the chimera of Elisa; and her heart, seduced by her imagination, sighed after her own fiction.

It is natural for our most familiar and most lively ideas to recur in sleep: and the dreams of Elisa soon persuaded her that her chimera had some reality.

Volange, very sure that he was not beloved by his wife, had in vain observed her with the eyes of jealousy; he saw her with her own sex gay and gentle, easy and affable, and sometimes even with an air of friendship; but no man had yet met with such a reception from her as could alarm him. With that sex her countenance was severe, her air disdainful, her whole behaviour cold; she spoke little, scarce vouchsafed attention to what was said, and when she did not seem tired, she appeared quite out of patience. To be at her age neither tender nor a coquette! inconceivable! However, at last she betrayed herself,

The opera of Zelindor, at its first appearance, had the most brilliant success. Elisa was present at the representation in her own little box, with one of her women, for whom she had a great partiality. Justina was her confidante, and nothing attaches a timid soul so much as having once surmounted the difficulty of unbosoming itself. Elisa would fain have had this confidante of her weakness perpetually with her; and her little box at the theatre was so dear to her, only on account of the liberty it afforded them of being there together, and alone.

Volange, who from the opposite side of the theatre observed all the movements of Elisa, saw her several times start at the sight of Zelindor, and talk to Justina with an air of passion.

A strange uneasiness possessed him; but in the evening, having found Justina a moment alone, 'Your mistress,' said he, 'seemed highly entertained at the play?'—'Ah! sir, she is distractedly fond of it: Zelindor is her passion. It seems to have been made on purpose for her. She is not recovered of the surprise into which she has been thrown by seeing her own dreams represented.'—'What! does your mistress dream of such things?'—'Alas! yes, sir, and you are much to blame to reduce her to the pleasure of dreaming. Indeed, you are very happy, that young and handsome as she is, she confines herself to the loving of sylphs.'—'Sylphs?'—'Yes, sir, sylphs. But I am betraying her secret.'—'You jest, Justina?'—'A fine jest, indeed! Indeed, sir, it is a shame to live with her as you do. Ah! when I see so young a lady, when she wakes, her complexion blooming, eyes languishing, with a mouth fresher than a rose, telling me, with a sigh, that she has just been happy in a dream; how I pity her! and how I hate you!'—'What d'ye mean? Your mistress had in her husband an uncommon lover; but she has returned the highest tenderness of love only with a coldness almost amounting to aversion.'—'You

fancy so; you have mistaken timidity for coldness; and that's always the way with the men. They have no pity on a young woman. Why should you grow cool? Why not make use of your power over her?'—'That is what has restrained me. I was unwilling to owe any thing to constraint; and I should have been much warmer in my instances, had she been more free in her refusals.'—'Alas! poor gentleman, how good you are with this delicacy of yours! You shall see how vastly they are obliged to you for it!'—'Harkye, Justina, a thought has just struck me, which, if you will but assist me, may reconcile us.'—'If I'll assist you!'—'Elisa is in love with sylphs; I may personate a sylph in love with her.'—'And how will you make yourself invisible?'—'By visiting her only by night.'—'Well, that's a good scheme enough.'—'It is not very new: more than one lover has availed himself of it; but Elisa does not expect it, and I am persuaded will be deceived. The chief difficulty is the opening the first stage of the plot; but I depend on your address to furnish me with an occasion.

An opportunity was not long in presenting itself. 'Ah! Justina,' said Elisa, the next day on waking, 'what happiness have I just enjoyed! I dreamed that I was under an arbour of roses, where the most beautiful of the celestial spirits sighed at my knees.'—'How! madam, spirits sigh! and how was this beautiful spirit made?'—'It would be in vain for me to endeavour to describe what has not its image among mankind. When the idea is effaced by my waking, I can scarce retrace it to myself.'—'But I may know at least what passed at your conference?'—'I don't know what; but I was transported, I heard a ravishing voice, drew in the sweetest perfumes, and at my waking all vanished.'

Volange was informed of his wife's dream, and in her regrets he thought he saw the means of beginning to act the sylph towards her. At that time essence of roses was scarce known in Paris: Vo-

lange put into Justina's hands a small phial of that precious elixir. 'To-morrow,' said he, 'before your mistress wakes, take care to perfume her bed with it.'

'O heaven!' said Elisa on waking, 'is it still a dream? Come here, Justina, smell, and tell me what you smell!'—'I, madam? I smell nothing.'—'Nothing! do you not smell roses?'—'You grow distracted, my dear mistress, pardon me for saying so. Your dreams might be passed over; but quite awake! Indeed I do not conceive you.'—'You are right, nothing is more inconceivable. Leave me! draw the curtains. Ah! the smell is still more prevailing.'—'You alarm me.'—'Harkye! I told you yesterday, if I remember right, that I was sorry that the dream of the arbour was dissipated, and that I was delighted with the fragrance I had breathed there. He has heard me, my dear Justina.'—'Who, madam?'—'Who! don't you know? You put me out of patience. Leave me! But he should know, as he is present, that it is not the flowers that I regret. Ah! how much sweeter was his voice! How much more did it touch my heart! And his features, his divine features! Unavailing wishes! Alas! I shall never see him.'—'Why really, madam, there is no great probability.'—'You throw me into despair: is it love to envy me, even to want to destroy the most pleasing illusion? for that it is one, I must believe; I am not a child. And yet this fragrance of the roses!—Yes, I perceive it, nothing is more real; and it is not now the season for those flowers.'—'What would you have me say to you, madam? All the desire I have to please you cannot make me believe a dream to be a reality.'—'Very well, mademoiselle, don't believe it. Prepare my toilette, that I may dress. I am in a confusion, in an emotion at which I blush, and which I know not how to appease.'

'Victory, sir,' said Justina, on seeing Volange:

'the sylph is announced and desired; we wish for him; let him appear; and take my word for it he will be very well received.'

Elisa was plunged all the day in a reverie which had the air of an enchantment: and in the evening her husband perceived that she waited with impatience the moment of going to deliver herself up to sleep. There was a communication between their apartments, according to custom, and Volange had agreed with her confidante on the method of getting, without noise, to his wife's pillow. But it was necessary, that either by a sigh, or by some words which were to escape, she should herself invite him to speak.

I forgot to mention that Elisa would not have any light by her in the night; not without reason. The pictures of the imagination are never so lively as in profound darkness. Thus Volange, without being perceived, espied the favourable moment. He heard Elisa sigh and seek repose with inquietude: 'Come, then,' said she, 'happy sleep, thou alone makest me love life.'—'It is for me,' said Volange, in a voice so soft that Elisa scarce heard him, 'it is for me to call upon sleep: I am happy only through him: it is in his bosom that I possess you.' He had not time to finish. Elisa gave a loud shriek, and Volange having disappeared, Justina ran up at Elisa's voice. 'What is the matter, madam?'—'Ah! I die: I have just heard him. Recal me, if possible, to life. I am loved, I am happy. Make haste, I cannot breathe.' Justina hastens, unties her ribands, gives her some salts to smell, which revive her, and still supporting her part of being incredulous, reproaches her for delivering herself up to ideas which disturb her repose, and affect her health. 'Treat me as a child, as a fool!' said Elisa. 'But it is no longer a dream, nothing is so true; I heard him as plain as I hear you.'—'Very well, madam, I will not put you out of patience: but endeavour to calm your spirits: re-

member, that in order to please a sylph, one must be handsome, and that we soon become otherwise without sleep.'—'Going, Justina? How cruel! Don't you see that I tremble all over? Stay at least till I sleep, if it be possible to sleep in my present agitation.'

At last her fine eyes grew heavy, and it was resolved between Justina and Volange, that, scared by the cry which Elisa had made, the sylph should in vain be wished for the next night. Accordingly, she called upon him in vain.

She was afraid he would never return more. 'My cries have frighted him,' said she. 'Good madam,' said Justina, 'is a spirit so fearful, then? And ought he not to have expected the fright which he put you into? Be easy: he knows what passes in your heart, as well as yourself. And perhaps at this moment he is listening.'—'What say you? You make me start.'—'How! are you not very glad that your sylph reads your soul?'—'Assuredly: nothing passes there, with which he has not reason to be pleased. But there is always something of man intermingled in the idea which we form of sylphs, and modesty.'—'Modesty, in my opinion, is out of the case with spirits. Where would be the harm, for example, in engaging him to return this evening?'—'Ah! it would be vain to dissemble; he knows very well how much I wish it.'

Elisa's wish was accomplished. She was laid down, the light put out, and Volange at her bed's head. 'D'ye think he will return?' said she to Justina. 'Yes, if he be gallant, he must be here already.'—'Ah, if he could but hear me!'—'He hears you,' replied Volange with a soft voice: 'but remove this witness, who gives me uneasiness.'—'Justina,' said Elisa, trembling; 'get away.'—'What now, madam? You seem moved.'—'Nothing; leave me, I say.' Justina obeyed, and as soon as they were alone, 'What, then,' said the

sylph, 'does my voice fright you? It is not usual to fear what we love'—'Alas,' said she, 'can I see without emotion my dreams thus realised, and passing, by an inconceivable prodigy, from illusion to reality? Shall I believe that one of the celestial spirits deigns to quit the heavens for me, and to be familiar with a mere mortal?'—'If you knew,' replied Volange, 'how much you efface all the charms of the nymphs of the air, you would be but little flattered with your conquest. Nor is it to vanity that I would owe the reward of my passion. That passion is pure and unalterable as the essence of my being; but it is delicate also to excess. We have only the sensations of the soul: you have them as well as we, Elisa; but in order to relish their delights, you must reserve for me that soul of which I am jealous; amuse yourself with all that the world has interesting and amiable; but love nothing in it like myself.'—'Alas! it is very easy for me to obey you,' said she, in a voice still faultering. 'The world has no charms for me. My soul, even when unoccupied, could not give access to vain pleasures which would seduce it: how can it be accessible then, now that you possess it? But you, O spirit celestial and pure, how can I flatter myself with fixing you, and being able to content you?'—'Learn,' replied Volange, 'what distinguishes us from all the spirits dispersed throughout the universe, and still more from the human species. A sylph has no happiness in himself: he is happy only in what he loves. Nature has forbid him the power of loving himself alone; and as he partakes of all the pleasures which he excites, he feels also all the pains which he occasions. Fate has left me the choice of this half of myself on which my happiness is to depend; but, that choice decided, we have no longer but one soul, and it is only in rendering you happy, that I can hope to be so.'—'Be happy, then,' said she to him with transport, 'for the mere idea of an union so sweet ravishes me, and

lifts me above myself. What comparison between this intimate commerce and that of dangerous mortals, whose slaves we are here! Alas, you know that I have submitted to the laws of Hymen, and that they have imposed fetters on me.'—'I know it,' said Volange, 'and one of my cares shall be to render them light.'—'Ah!' resumed she, 'be not jealous on that account. My husband is perhaps the man in the world who has the least tincture of the vice of his species: but they are all so conceited and so proud of their advantages, so indulgent to their own faults, and so rigorous to ours; so little scrupulous as to the means of seducing and making us slaves, that there would be as much imprudence as weakness in delivering ourselves up to them.'—'Well,' said her sylph, 'would you believe it? All that with which you reproach the men, do we reproach the sylphids. Soft, insinuating, fertile in evasions, there is no art which they do not employ to domineer over the spirits; but once sure of their power, a capricious and absolute will, an impèrious pride, to which every thing must bow, take place of timidity, gentleness, and complaisance; and it is not till after having loved them, that we perceive we ought to hate them. This prevailing character, which nature has given them, has however its exceptions: it is the same among the men. But be that as it may, my dear Elisa, both the one and the other world will be strangers to us, if you love me as I do you. Adieu: my duty and your repose oblige me to quit you. Heaven has confided to me the care of your star; I am going to direct its course. May it diffuse over you the most favourable influence.'—'Alas! going so soon!'—'Yes, in order to see you again to-morrow at the same hour.'—'Adieu:—but no, one word more. May I have a confidante?'—'You have one, confine yourself to her. Justina loves you, and she is dear to me.'—'What name shall I give you in speaking to her about you?'—'In

heaven they call me *Valoé*, and in the sylphid language that name signifies *all Soul*.'—'Ah! I merit the same name since I have heard you.' The sylph then vanished. Elisa's heart swam in joy, she was at the summit of her wishes, and in the midst of the delicious ideas which possessed her, sleep seized her senses.

Justina was informed of every thing that had passed, and had no need to repeat it to Volange. She only acquainted him that he had left his wife in an enchantment. 'That is not enough,' said he: 'in the sylph's absence, I would have every thing recal his passion to her. You read her soul, you know her likings; instruct me in her wishes: the sylph will have the air of divining them.' In the evening, Elisa, to be the more at liberty, went to walk alone with Justina in one of those magnificent gardens which are the ornament of Paris: and though she was there wholly taken up with her sylph, an inclination, natural to young women, made her cast her eyes on the dress of an unknown lady. 'Ah, what a pretty gown!' cried she to herself, and Justina pretended not to hear her: but the adroit attendant, having heard the name of this lady who was so well dressed, remembered it, and told it to Volange.

The hour of rendezvous being come, Elisa goes to bed; and as soon as she is alone, 'Ah! my dear Valoé,' said she, 'have you forgot me? Here am I alone, and you come not!'—'He waited for you,' said Volange; 'your image has followed him into heaven. He has seen only you in the midst of all the aerial court. But you, Elisa, in his absence, have you wished only for him?'—'No,' said she to him assuredly; 'nothing but you interests me.'—'I know, however, Elisa, that you have formed a wish that was not for me.'—'You make me uneasy,' said she; 'I have examined myself in vain; I know not what that wish can be.'—'You have forgot it, but I remember it; and far from com-

plaining of it, I wish that you may often have the like. I have told you the sylphs are jealous, but it only renders them the more earnest to please. Do not be astonished to see me curious of the smallest particulars of your life: I would leave in it only the flowers, and remove the smallest thorn. For example, your husband ceases not to give me uneasiness. How are you with him?'—'Why,' said Elisa, a little confounded, 'I live with him as with a man; in that diffidence and fear which a sex born the enemy of ours naturally inspires. They gave me to him without consulting me: I followed my duty, and not my inclination. He said he loved me, and he would have pleased me, that is, have captivated me: he has not succeeded; and his vanity, which he calls delicacy, has diverted him from his design. Thus you see we are good friends; or, if you please, both of us free.'—'Is he at least a little complaisant?'—'Why, yes, sufficiently to seduce a woman who did not know so well as I how dangerous men are.'—'You might have fallen into worse hands; and this husband is not so troublesome as his sex generally are. He does well as to the rest: and if ever you should have cause to complain of him, he shall be punished for it instantly.'—'Oh no; I conjure you,' said she, trembling, 'though he should totally neglect me, never interfere in it. I owe you all my confidence; but it would be a cruel abuse of it to do him any manner of hurt. He is unhappy enough in being a man, and it is a sufficient punishment.'—'Your soul is celestial, charming Elisa! a mortal did not deserve you. Listen; I have not told you our manner of punishing the men. They know only fire and sword: but we have gentler methods of vengeance. Whenever your husband shall have displeased you, you shall inform me of it; and from that instant regret, reproach shall seize his soul, and he shall have neither peace with me, nor with himself, till he has expiated at your knees

the displeasure he has occasioned I will do more, I will inspire into him all that you inspire into me. Thus the spirit of your sylph shall animate your husband, and shall be present to you without ceasing.'—'That,' said Elisa, transported, 'is the only way of making me love him.' Thus passed this last conversation.

The day after, Elisa being at her toilette, Justina cast her eyes on the sofa in her closet, and sets up a cry of astonishment. Elisa turns about, and sees there displayed a gown like that which she had seen in her walk. 'Ah! see, now, in what manner he avenges himself of a wish not formed for him! Justina, will you believe me at last? Is not a sylph to be adored?' Elisa's eyes could not weary themselves in admiring this new prodigy. Volange arrives in that moment. 'There's a beautiful gown!' said he; 'Your taste, madam, does great honour to what you love. I think,' continued he, examining the stuff nearer, 'this is made by the hands of fairies.' This familiar manner of speaking came out so a-propos, that Elisa blushed as if she had been betrayed, and her secret revealed.

In the evening she failed not to extol the forward gallantry of her handsome little sylph; and he in his turn said to her a thousand things, so délicate, and so tender, on the happiness of embellishing what we love, and of enjoying the good which we do, that she was perpetually repeating it: 'No, never mortal knew such language: none but a celestial being can speak and think thus'—'I acquaint you, however, beforehand,' said he, 'that your husband will soon become my rival. I take a pleasure in purifying his soul, in rendering it as gentle, as tender, as flexible to your desires as his nature permits. You will be a gainer by it without doubt, Elisa, and your happiness is wholly mine: but shall not I be a loser?'—'Ah! can you doubt,' said she, 'that I shall not attribute to you

all the care he shall take to please me? Is he not like a statue which you endeavour to animate?'—'Thus you will love me in him; and in thinking that it is I who animate him, you will take a pleasure in rendering him happy.'—'No, Valoé, that would be to deceive him: I hate falsehood. It is you that I love, not him; and to testify to him what I feel for you, would be to deceive both.' Volange, not to engage any further in so delicate a dispute, changed the subject, and asked her how she had amused herself all the day. 'Hey!' said she to him, 'do not you know, you who read my thoughts? The moments in which I was disengaged, I employed in tracing out a cypher, in which our two names are entwined. I draw flowers pretty well, and I never did any thing with so much taste as those which form that kind of chain.'—'You have also,' said he to her, 'a rare talent which you neglect, and the pleasures of which are heavenly; you have a touching voice, an exquisite ear, and the harp under your fingers, mingling its accords with your sounds, would form the delight of the inhabitants of the air.' Elisa promised to exercise herself in it, and they parted more taken, more enchanted with each other than ever.

'I am often alone,' said she to her husband, 'music would amuse me. The harp is in fashion, and I have an inclination to try it.'—'Nothing so easy,' said Volange, with an air of complaisance; and that very evening she had a harp.

The sylph returned at his hour, and appeared charmed with seeing her seize and follow his ideas with so much vivacity. 'Alas!' said Elisa to him, 'you are more happy, you divine my wishes, and know how to prevent them. How precious is the gift of reading the soul of the person we love! We don't allow time to wish. Such is your advantage over me.'—'Console yourself,' said Valoé to her, 'complaisance has its value: I fulfil my own wishes when I prevent yours; and you, in

waiting for mine, have the pleasure of telling yourself that it is my soul guides you. It is more flattering to prevent; but it is sweeter to comply. My advantage is that of self-love; yours is that of love.'

So much delicacy was to Elisa the most charming of all ties. She would fain have never ceased to hear a voice so dear; but, out of tenderness to her, Volange took care to withdraw as soon as he had gently moved her, and sleep came to calm her spirits.

The first idea which she had at her waking was that of her sylph, and the second that of her harp. It was brought to her the evening before, quite plain, and without ornaments. She flies into her cabinet, and finds a harp decorated with a garland of flowers, which seemed freshly gathered. Her joy was equal to her astonishment. 'No,' said she, 'no; never has the pencil in the hand of a mortal produced this illusion.' And what doubt but this was a present from her sylph? Two brilliant wings crowned this harp; the same, without doubt, which Valoé played on in the celestial choir. While she was returning him thanks, the musician arrives whom she had sent for to give her lessons.

Timotheus, instructed by Volange in the part which he was to perform, opened with an encomium on the harp. 'What fulness, what harmony in the sounds of this fine instrument! What could be more soft, more majestic? The harp,' if we might take his word for it, 'would renew all the prodigies of the lyre. But the triumph of the harp,' added this new Orpheus, 'is when it supports with its symphonies the accents of a voice melodious and tender. Observe, too, madam, that nothing discovers to more advantage the graces of a fine hand and arm; and when a lady knows how to give her head an air of enthusiasm, so that her features grow animated, and her eyes kindle at the

sounds which she occasions, she becomes half as beautiful again.'

Elisa cut short this encomium, by asking her master whether he was a descendant of Timotheus, Alexander's musician. 'Yes, madam,' said he, 'of the same family.' She took her first lesson. The music-master appeared enchanted with the seraphic tones of the harp. 'Divine!' cried he. 'I warrant it,' said Elisa to herself. 'Come, madam, try these harmonious strings.' Elisa applied to them a timid hand; and every note that she drew from the instrument thrilled to her very heart. 'Wonderful, madam,' cried Timotheus, 'wonderful! I hope soon to hear you accompany your touching voice, and set off my music and my verses.'—'You make verses, then, too?' demanded she, smiling. 'Ah, madam!' said Timotheus, 'that is the strangest thing in the world, and I can scarce conceive it myself. I had heard that we had a genius, and I took it for a fable; but upon my word nothing is more real. I had one, I who now speak to you, and I had him without knowing it. It was but yesterday evening that I had fresh confirmation of it.'—'And how did you make this discovery?'—'How? last night, in my sleep, my genius appeared to me in a dream, and dictated the following verses:

'The empty honour I renounce
To guide thy car, Aurora!
No more, no more will I announce
Thy sweet return, oh Flora!
Me now employs a gentler, happier care;
To guard my waking, guard my sleeping fair.
In vain Aurora weeps, in vain
Would Flora bind me in her rosy chain:
With dear Elisa will I stay,
Elisa fairer—fairer far than they.'

'What!' said Elisa, with much emotion, 'what, Timotheus, did you make these verses?'—'I, madam! I never made any in my life. It was my genius that dictated them to me. He has done

more; he has set them to music, as you shall hear. Well, madam,' said he, after having sung them, 'how do you like them? Is it not happy to have a genius like mine?'—'But, sir, don't you know at least who this Elisa is, whom you celebrate?'—'Why, madam, I believe it is a name like Phillis, Chloris, or Iris. My genius pitched upon that, because it is agreeable to the ear.'—'So, you do not pique yourself upon understanding the meaning of the verses which you sing?'—'No, madam; but that is no matter; they are melodious, and full of sensibility, and that is enough for a song.'—'Let me beg you,' resumed she, 'to repeat them to nobody else; and if your genius should inspire any more, pray reserve them for me.'

She expected her sylph with impatience, in order to thank him for the inspiration. He denied them; but so weakly, that she was but the more convinced. He confessed, however, that it was not without reason that those men were regarded as inspired, who, without reflection, produced fine thoughts. 'These are,' said he, 'the favourites of the sylphs; and each of them has his own particular one, whom he calls his genius. It is no wonder, therefore, that Timotheus should have one; and if he inspires him with verses which please you, he may boast of being next to me the happiest of the inhabitants of the air.' The genius of Timotheus became every day more fertile, and every day Elisa was more sensible of the praises he bestowed on her. However, Volange prepared her a new surprise, and the following was the object of it.

The reader remembers that she amused herself in tracing out a cypher, in which the name of Valoé was interwoven with her own. One day being invited to a feast, she was preparing to put on her diamonds: she opens her casket, and what does she see? her bracelets, her necklace, her aigrette, her ear-rings, mounted after the pattern

of that very cypher which she had drawn. Her first sensation was that of embarrassment and surprise. 'What will Volange think? What will he suspect?' While she was yet at her toilette, enters Volange; and casting his eyes on her jewels, 'Ah!' said he, 'nothing can be more gallant. My name and yours in the same cypher! I should be very much flattered, madam, to suppose that this were a stroke of sentiment.' She blushed instead of feigning; but in the evening Valoé was chid. 'You have exposed me,' said she, 'to a danger at which I tremble even yet: I have seen the instant wherein there was a necessity for me either to deceive my husband, or to give him the most humiliating opinion of me; and although the advantage which the men draw from our sincerity authorises us to use dissimulation, I perceive that in making use of that right, I should be ill at ease with myself.' Valoé failed not to commend her delicacy. 'A little lie,' said he, 'is always a little evil, and I should be sorry to have been the occasion. But the resemblance of the name of Volange to mine had not escaped me, and I knew that your husband would go no farther than appearances. I have begun by rendering him discreet: that is the first good quality in a husband.'

The whole winter had passed away in gallantries on the part of the sylph, and on the side of Elisa in emotions of surprise and joy which bordered on enchantment.

The first, and the most beautiful of the seasons, the time in which we enjoy nature, arrives. Volange had a country-house. 'We will set out whenever you please,' said he to his wife; and though he had said this in the handsomest manner, and in the sweetest tone of voice, she perceived very well, she said, that this invitation carried in it the imperious will of a husband. She confided her pain to Valoé. 'I don't see,' said he to her, 'any thing painful in what he

has proposed to you. Nothing attaches you to the town, and the country is at present a delicious abode, especially to a soul sensible and benevolent as yours. We there see in nature the first efforts of her bounteous inclination; and the care of making mortals happy, renews itself there under a thousand forms. The forests crowned with a thick verdure, the orchards in bloom, the corn springing up, the meadows enamelled, the flocks newly recruited, and bounding with joy at the first sight of the light; all concur to present us in the country the images of bounty. In winter nature shows herself under an aspect threatening and horrible; in autumn she is rich and fruitful, but she groans to unburden herself, and her liberality afflicts her; even in summer she sells her gifts, and the sad image of excessive labour joins itself to that of abundance. It is in spring that nature is gaily prodigal of her riches, and fond of the good she is doing.'—'Alas!' said Elisa, 'Nature is beautiful, I grant; but will she be so to me in that very place where I connected my fortunes to those of a mortal, where I took an oath to be devoted to him, where every thing will recal the humiliating remembrance to my mind?'—'No,' replied the sylph, 'nothing, my dear Elisa, nothing in nature is humiliating, but what is contrary to her ordinances. The perfection of a plant is to flourish and bud; the perfection of a woman is to become a wife and a mother. If you had opposed the wisdom of this design, you would not have received my vows.'—'What!' said Elisa, 'can a pure essence, a celestial spirit, love in me that which degrades me beneath him?'—'Be what you are, my dear creature: I love you as a sylph; and it is not of your senses that I am jealous. Let your soul be fair and pure, let it be devoted to me, that is sufficient. As to what are called your charms, they are submitted to the laws of mortals: one of them possesses them; let him dispose of them;

far from complaining, I shall rejoice at it, for one of your duties is to render him happy.'—'Ah! give me time, at least, to accustom myself to this way of thinking. In the country we see one another oftener: I shall familiarise myself, perhaps, to that duty. But prithee do not abandon me!'—'I shall be there with you perpetually. I love peace and silence.'

There was at this country-house a savage and solitary place, which Elisa called her wilderness, where she used to retire to read or think at her ease. Scarce was she arrived there, when she went to it; but all was changed. Instead of her seat of moss, she found a throne of turf, interspersed with violets growing in festoon and love-knots. This throne was shaded with lilies, which over-arched the sweetbriar, formed the circuit of it, and mingled with the odour of the lilies the most delicious perfumes.

Elisa's first care, at her return, was to thank her husband for the attention which he had shown in embellishing her little hermitage. 'It is, I suppose,' said he, 'a piece of gallantry of my gardener; I am much obliged to him for having thought of it.'—'Hilary,' said Elisa, on seeing the gardener, 'I am obliged to you for having made so pretty an arbour for me.'—'Arbours, madam?' said the sly rustic. 'Yes, yes, I have enough to do to think of arbours truly! I am hardly able to go through the labour of my kitchen-garden. If they would have arbours, and well kept up, they must allow me more hands.'—'At least you have not neglected mine; and this fine bower of lilies, with that hedge of sweetbriar, enchants me.'—'Oh! the lilies, the sweetbriar, and all that, thank God, comes of itself, and without any trouble of mine.'—'What, in earnest then, have not you touched it?'—'No, madam; but that is nothing; and if you please, after the rising of the sap, I will give it a few cuts with the pruning-knife.'—'And this

turf, interspersed with violets, was it not you that cultivated it?'—'Troth, madam, not I: neither turf nor violets will do for your table, and my garden takes up enough of my time without all these fineries.'

Elisa, after this discourse, no longer doubted that the metamorphosis of her wilderness into a delicious arbour was the work of her sylph. 'Ah!' said she in her transport, 'this shall be the temple to which I will repair to adore him. I flatter myself he will be present there: but will he be for ever invisible?'

He came in the evening, according to custom. 'Valoé,' said she to him, 'my arbour is charming. But, shall I tell you? To complete its beauty, you must perform one final prodigy, and there render yourself visible to me. That alone is now wanting to my happiness.'—'You demand of me, my dear Elisa, a thing that depends not on myself. The king of the air sometimes grants that favour to his favourites; but it is so rare! And even when he grants it, he prescribes the form which they shall take, and he generally prefers the most fantastic, in order to amuse himself.'—'Ah!' said Elisa, 'so I do but see you, no matter under what form.' He promised her, therefore, to solicit that favour with the most pressing instances.

'At present,' said he to her, 'how passed your journey?'—'Why, very well. My husband prattled with a gaiety that was natural enough; and I can easily discover the effect of the trouble which you take with him. But it is in vain that the natural imperiousness of the men bends a little, it still keeps its spring: one may temper, but cannot change it, at least not without long habitude.'—'Let us not despair of any thing,' said Valoé. 'I have a deal of power over his soul! What do you propose doing to-morrow, my dear

Elisa ?'—' I shall bathe in the morning.'—' I will come to see you bathe, if possible, and I will pass a moment with you.'

On Elisa's waking in the morning, word was brought her that the bath was ready. She went there with the faithful Justina: but as the sylph was to come to see her, and modesty is always timid, she would not have the curtains drawn, and scarce admit any light into the room.

Elisa enters the bath, and in a pannel opposite to her, her eyes perceive some confused features. This was the portrait of Elisa painted beneath glass, and which Volange had caused to be put there instead of a looking-glass: a striking delusion, but easy to be produced, by means of a groove made in the partition, through which silently slided, by turns, the looking-glass and the picture, one after another.

In this picture Elisa was exalted on a cloud, and surrounded with aerial spirits, who presented her with garlands of flowers. At first she took what she saw for the reflection of the opposite objects; but in proportion as, with an eye more attentive, she discovers what strikes her, surprise succeeds to mistake. ' Justina,' said she, ' let in some light. Either I dream, or I see. O heaven!' cried she, as soon as a sufficient degree of light was thrown on the picture, ' my image in that glass!' —' Why, madam, I see mine there too. Where is the wonder, that one sees one's self in a looking-glass ?'—' Come here yourself then, come here, I say. Is that the effect of a looking-glass ?'—' Certainly.'—' Certainly! this cloud, these flowers, these genii, and I in the midst of that celestial circle, borne in triumph through the air!'—' You are not well awake yet, madam, and no doubt but you are finishing your dream in the bath.'—' No, Justina, I don't dream; but I see that picture is not made for your eyes. O, my dear

Valoé, it is you that have painted it. How ingenious is your tenderness!'

Elisa's eyes were for a whole hour fixed on the picture. She expected her sylph; but he came not. 'He has but just passed by,' said she, 'and in that homage has declared himself. But, what will my husband say? How shall I explain this prodigy to him?'—'Ah! madam,' said Justina, 'if this picture be not visible to my eyes, why should it be so to his?'—'Right: but I am so confounded!'..... In saying these words, she lifts up her eyes, and instead of the picture which she had seen, she finds there only the looking-glass. 'Ah! I am easy,' said she; 'the picture is vanished. My amiable sylph will not give me the slightest uneasiness. And how should I not love a spirit wholly occupied with my pleasures and repose?' Impatient of knowing the success of her request, she pretended in the evening to be fatigued with walking, and to have need of sleep. The sylph did not make her wait. 'I know not,' said he, 'my dear Elisa, whether you will be content with what I have obtained. I am permitted to appear to you.'—'Ah! that is all that I desire.'—'But what I foresaw is come to pass. The king of the air, who reads our thoughts, has prescribed to me the form which I am to take; and that form is.... guess.'—'I cannot tell; put me quickly out of my pain.'—'Your husband's.'—'My husband's!'—'I have done every thing in the world to obtain a form which should please you more; but it was impossible. He threatened to withdraw his boon from me, if I was not content; and reduced to this alternative, I liked that better than nothing.'—'Very well; and when shall I see you?'—'To-morrow, in your little wilderness, at sunset.'—'I shall be there, for I depend on you.'—'You may without doubt.'—'And yet you promised to come to see me this morning.

I received the most gallant homage from you. But it was you that I expected.'—'I was not far off; but intimidated by the presence of Justina...' —'Ah! I was wrong; I ought to have sent her away. But you shall have no more reason to blame me on that account, and I shall be alone in the arbour.'

This assignation did not fail to give Volange some little uneasiness. 'She delivers herself up to me,' said he. 'Shall I avail myself, to try her, of the illusion into which I have thrown her? It would be very pleasing to me to attempt her, if I was sure that she would resist! But if I were so sure of that, I should have no need of trial. Fatal curiosity! Let me consider: let me see which is the less dangerous way. Ought I to clear it up to myself, or remain in doubt? In the first case, doubt leaves me in a cloud: and can I answer for my thoughts? Perhaps when it shall be too late to justify her, I shall do her the injury to believe that her imagination being seduced would have triumphed over her virtue. I shall then reproach myself in vain, and the evil will be without remedy. If, on the contrary, I try her, and she resist, I am too happy. But if she yield!... Well, if she yield; I shall think that the virtue of women is not able to hold out against spirits. Yes, but that spirit is clothed with a body; and though that body be mine, no thanks to Elisa. What a labyrinth! On entering into it I foresaw every thing, except the means of getting out. Let me deliberate no longer; let me repair to the arbour; and the occasion shall determine me.'

Volange, without pretending to observe Elisa, did not suffer one of her movements to escape him. He saw her dress herself with a modesty full of grace, and the decency she mingled in her attire re-encouraged him a little. He remarked

also, that she wore all the day an air of sweetness, and a serenity which announced an innocent joy.

However, the impatient eyes of Elisa measured the course of the sun. At last the happy moment approaches, and Volange, whom she had seen set out in a hunting-dress, repairs first to the arbour in the most elegant habit.

Elisa arrives, perceives him at a distance, and the emotion it excited in her almost makes her faint away. He flies to meet her reaches out his hand to her, and seeing her trembling, seats her on her little throne of turf.

Elisa recovering her spirits, finds her sylph at her knees. 'What!' said he to her, 'was it fear that the sight of me was to inspire into you? Did I not spare you the surprise of it? Did not you desire to see me? Are you sorry for it, and would you have me disappear?'—'Alas, no! punish not me for an involuntary weakness. Joy and tenderness have a greater share than terror in the disorder you now occasion.'—'I tremble,' said Volange to himself: 'she is softened; a bad beginning! Ah! my dear Elisa, why was I not free to choose among mortals him whose figure might have pleased you most! and how ill at ease is a lover under the form of a husband!'—'That is the same thing,' said she, smiling. 'It would have been more agreeable to me, I confess, to have seen you under the image of one of these flowers which I love, or of one of those birds, which, like you, are inhabitants of the air; but as a man, I had as lief see you under the features of my husband as those of any other person. You seem to me even to set it off. It is, indeed, Volange that I see in you; but your soul gives to his eyes something, I know not what, that is celestial. Your voice, in passing through his mouth, communicates to it a charm perfectly di-

vine; and in his action I perceive graces which never body animated by a mere mortal possessed.' —'Well then, if you love me such as you now see me, I can always be the same.'—'You enchant me.'—'Shall you be happy then!' added he, kissing her hand. Elisa blushed, and withdrew the hand which he had seized. 'You forget,' said she, 'that it is a sylph, and not a man that I love in you. Valoé is to me only a spirit, as Elisa is to you only a soul; and if you have not been able to take the figure of a mortal without changing the purity of your essence and of your love, quit that degrading form, and make me not blush any longer at the imprudence of my wishes.'—'Very well,' said Volange, in a low voice: 'but I now touch on the critical moment.'

'Elisa, it is no longer time to feign. I have done what you desired; but learn what it costs me.' 'I consent to it (said the king of the genii to me); obey the laws of a woman, become man; but flatter not thyself with having his sensations only in appearance. Thou art now going to love like other mortals, and to feel the pleasures and pains of it. If thou art unhappy, come not groaning and troubling the air with thy complaints. I banish thee from the heavens till the moment wherein Elisa shall have crowned thy wishes.' —I hoped to prevail on you,' added the sylph, 'or rather I meant to comply with you; I submitted to that severe decree. Judge, then, whether I love you, and whether you ought to punish me for it.'

This discourse drove Elisa to despair. 'O thou most imprudent and most cruel of aerial spirits!' cried she: 'What have you done? And to what extremity do you reduce me!' Volange quaked at seeing his wife's eyes filled with tears. 'Why did you not consult me?' added she. 'Was it for my shame, or for your punishment, that I de-

sired to see you? And whatever that desire was, could you think that it could overcome what I owe to you and what I owe to myself? I love you, Valoé, I repeat it to you; and if there needed nothing but my life to repair the evils which I do you, you should no longer have cause to complain. But my virtue is dearer to me than my life and my love.' Volange leaped with joy. 'I cannot blame you,' said he, 'for an excess of delicacy; but see how much I resemble Volange: it is almost he, or rather he himself, who falls at your feet, who adores you, and demands of you the reward of the most faithful and tenderest passion.'—'No, it is in vain that you resemble him; you are not he, and it is to him alone that the reward which you demand is due. Arise; depart from me; and see me not again all your life. Leave me, I say: are you mad? What is that insulting joy which I see sparkling in your eyes? Would you have the audaciousness to hope yet?'—'Yes, I hope, my dear Elisa, that you will live only for me.'—'Ah! this is the height of outrage.'—'Hear me.'—'No, I will hear nothing.'—'A single word will disarm thee.'—'That word then must be an eternal farewel.'—'No, death only shall separate us: behold thy husband in thy sylph. Yes, it is Volange, whom you hated, that is this Valoé whom you love.'—'O Heaven!.... But no, you impose upon me by the resemblance.'—'No, I tell thee, and Justina is witness that the whole affair is but a jest.'—'Justina! She is my confidante.'—'She has helped me to mislead you: she shall assist me to undeceive you.'—'You! my husband! can it be possible? I tremble yet; finish, tell me how these prodigies were performed.'—'It is love has wrought them all, and you shall know by what means.'—'Ah! if it be true!'....—'If it be true, my Elisa, can you believe that there is in the world a man worthy to be loved?'—'Yes, I will

believe that there is one, and that it is I who possess him.'

Justina being interrogated, confessed all, and was obliged to take her oath that Valoé was none other than Volange. 'It is now,' said Elisa, throwing herself into the arms of her husband, 'it is now that I am enchanted, and I hope that nothing but death alone will break the charm.'

LAURETTA.

It was the festival of the village of Coulange. The Marquis of Clancé, whose seat was at no great distance, was come with his company to see this rural spectacle, and to mingle in the dances of the villagers; as it happens pretty often to those whom disgust chases from the lap of luxury, and who are carried in despite of themselves towards pleasures that are pure and simple.

Among the young country girls who gave new life to the joy that reigned there, and who were dancing under the elm, who would not have distinguished Lauretta, by the elegance of her figure, the regularity of her features, and that natural grace which is more touching than beauty? She eclipsed all others that assisted at the festival. Ladies of quality, who piqued themselves on being handsome, could not help owning that they had never seen any thing so ravishing. They called her up to them, and examined her, as a painter does a model. 'Lift up your eyes, child,' said the ladies. 'What vivacity, what sweetness, what voluptuousness in her looks! If she did but know what they express! What havoc a skilful coquette would make with those eyes! And that mouth! Can any thing be more fresh? What a vermillion on her lips! How pure an enamel on her teeth! Her face is a little brown and sun-burnt; but it is the complexion of health.—See how that ivory neck is rounded on those fine shoulders! How well she'd look in a genteel dress! And those little budding charms which love himself seems to have planted! Well! that is extremely pleasant! On whom is nature going to lavish her gifts? Where is beauty going to hide herself? Lauretta, how old are you?'—'I

was fifteen last month.'—'You are to be married soon without doubt?'—'My father says that there is no hurry.'—'And you, Lauretta, have you no sweetheart lurking in your heart?'—'I don't know what a sweetheart is.'—'What, is there no young man that you wish to have for a husband?'—'I never trouble my head about that; it is my father's business.'—'What does your father do?'—'He cultivates his farm.'—'Is he rich?'—'No; but he says he is happy if I am discreet.'—'And how do you employ yourself?'—'I help my father; I work with him.'—'With him! What! do you cultivate the ground?'—'Yes, but the toils of the vineyard are only an amusement to me. To weed, plant vine-props, bind the vine-branch to them, to thin the leaves that the grapes may ripen, and to gather it when it is ripe, all that is not very laborious.'—'Poor child! I am not surprised that those fine hands are tanned! What pity that she should be born in a low and obscure state!

Lauretta, who in her village had never excited any thing but envy, was a little surprised at her inspiring pity. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her uneasiness, it had never come into her head that she was an object of pity. But in casting her eyes on the dress of those ladies, she saw very well that they were in the right. What difference between their clothes and hers! What freshness and what beauty in the light silken stuff which flowed in long folds about them! What delicate shoes! With what grace and elegance their hair was drest! What new lustre that fine linen, and those ribands, those laces gave to their half-veiled charms! Indeed those ladies had not the lively air of high health; but could Lauretta imagine that the luxury which dazzled her was the cause of that languor, which rouge itself was not able to disguise? While she was ruminating on all this, the Count de Luxy approaches her, and invites her to dance with him.

He was young, well dressed, well made, and too seducing for Lauretta.

Though she had not the most delicate taste in dancing, she could not but remark in the nobleness, the justness, and the lightness of the count's movements a grace which was not to be found in the caperings of the young villagers. She had sometimes felt her hand pressed, but never by a hand so soft. The count in dancing followed her with his eyes. Lauretta found that his looks gave life and soul to the dance; and whether it was that she tried from emulation to give the same grace to hers, or whether the first spark of love communicated itself from her heart to her eyes, they replied to those of the count by the most natural expression of joy and sentiment.

The dance ended, Lauretta went and seated herself at the foot of the elm, and the count at her knees. Let us not part any more,' said he to her, 'my pretty dear: I will dance with nobody but you.'—'That is doing me a great deal of honour,' said she; 'but it would make my companions uneasy; and in this village they are apt to be jealous.' —'And well they may, to see you so handsome; and in town they would be the same: it is a misfortune which will follow you every where. Ah, Lauretta! if in Paris, in the midst of those women so vain of beauty which is only artificial, they were to see you appear, all at once, with those natural charms of which you are so unconscious!'—'I, sir, at Paris! Alas! what should I do there?'—'Be the delight of all eyes, and make the conquest of all hearts. Hark ye, Lauretta, we have not opportunity to talk together here. But, in two words, it depends only on yourself to have, instead of an obscure cottage, and a vineyard to cultivate—it depends only on yourself to have, at Paris, a little palace shining with gold and silk, a table according to your wish, the gayest furniture, the most elegant equipage, gowns for all seasons, and of all

colours; in short, every thing which forms the agreeableness of an easy, quiet, and delicious life, without any other care than that of enjoying them, and of loving me as I do you. Think of it at your leisure. To-morrow there is to be a ball at the castle; all the youth of the village are invited. You will be there, my sweet Lauretta! and tell me if my passion touches you, and whether you accept my offers. To-day I ask nothing but secrecy, secrecy the most inviolable. Observe it well: if it escape you, all the happiness which now awaits you will vanish like a dream.'

Lauretta thought she had been in a dream. The brilliant lot that had been painted to her was so far from the humble state to which she was reduced, that a passage so easy, and so rapid, from one to the other, was inconceivable. The handsome young man who had made her those offers had not, however, the air of a deceiver. He had talked to her so seriously! She had seen so much sincerity in his eyes, and in his language!

'I should easily have perceived it,' said she, 'if he had wanted to make a fool of me. And yet, why all this mystery which he has so strongly enjoined me? For making me happy, he requires me to love him: nothing more just: but sure he will consent that my father shall partake of his benefits; why then conceal our proceedings from my father?' If Lauretta had had the idea of seduction and vice, she would easily have comprehended wherefore Lusy demanded secrecy; but the discretion they had infused into her went no farther than to teach her to decline the rough liberties of the village youths; and in the honest and respectful air of the count, she saw nothing against which she was to be upon her guard.

Wholly taken up with these reflections, her head filled with the image of luxury and abundance, she returns to her humble habitation; every thing there seemed changed. Lauretta, for the first time, was

mortified at living under thatch. The plain moveables, which use had before made precious to her, were debased in her eyes; the domestic cares which she had charged herself with began to be disagreeable: she found no longer the same taste in that bread to which labour gives a relish; and on that fresh straw where she slept so well, she sighed for gilded roofs and a rich down bed.

It was much worse the next day, when she was obliged to return to labour, and to go on a burning hill to support the heat of the day. 'At Paris,' said she, 'I should wake only to enjoy myself at my ease, without any other care than that of loving and of pleasing. His honour the count assured me of it. How amiable the count is! Of all the girls in the village he regarded only me; he even quitted the ladies of the castle for a poor country girl. He is not proud, sweet gentleman! And yet he might very well be so! One would have thought that I did him a favour in preferring him to the young fellows of the village: he thanked me for it with looks so tender! an air so humble and touching! and language, what an amiable sweetness in his language! Though he had talked to the lady of the place, he could not have spoken more genteelly. By good luck, I was pretty well dressed; but if he were to see me to-day! What clothes! What a condition am I in!'

The disgust at her situation only redoubled during three days of fatigue and heaviness, which she had still to sustain before she should again see the count.

The moment, which they both expected with impatience, arrives. All the youth of the village are assembled at the neighbouring castle; and in a bower of linden-trees, the sound of instruments soon gives the signal for the dance. Lauretta advances with her companions, no longer with that deliberate air which she had at the village feast, but with an air modest and timorous. This was

to Lusy a new beauty; and she appeared as one of the Graces, timid and decent, instead of a lively and wanton nymph. He distinguished her from the rest in his salute, but without any symptom of correspondence between them. He abstained even from approaching her, and delayed dancing with her, till another had set him the example. This other was the Chevalier de Soligny, who, ever since the village feast, had never ceased talking of Lauretta in a strain of rapture. Lusy imagined him a rival, and anxiously followed him with his eyes; but it was needless for Lauretta to perceive his jealousy, in order to remove it. In dancing with Soligny, her look was vague, her air indifferent, her behaviour cold and negligent. It came to Lusy's turn to dance with her, and he thought he saw, as he saluted her, all her graces animate themselves, all her charms spring up in her countenance. The precious colouring of modesty diffused itself there; a furtive and almost imperceptible smile moved her rosy lips; and the favour of a touching look transported him with joy and love. His first emotion, had they been alone, would have been to fall at Lauretta's feet, to thank her, and to adore her; but he commands his very eyes to restrain the fire of their looks: his hand alone, in pressing that of her whom his heart calls his love, expresses to her, by tremblings, his transports.

'Beautiful Lauretta,' said he to her, after the dance, 'remove a little from your companions. I am impatient to know what you have resolved.'—'Not to take one step without the consent of my father, and to follow his advice in every thing. If you mean me good, I would have him partake of it; if I follow you, I would have him consent to it.'—'Ah, beware of consulting him; it is he whom above all I ought to fear. There are formalities among you, previous to love and union, with which my title, my condition, forbid me to comply.—Your father would subject me to them; he would require

impossibilities of me; and on my refusal, he would accuse me of having wanted to deceive you. He knows not how much I love you; but you, Lauretta, can you think me capable of doing you an injury?' —'Alas, no, I believe you to be goodness itself. You would be a great hypocrite if you were bad!' —'Dare then to trust to me.'—'It is not that I distrust you; but I cannot deal mysteriously with my father: I belong to him, I depend on him. If what you propose is proper, he will consent to it.' —'He will never consent to it. You will destroy me, you will repent it, when too late; and you will be all your life condemned to those vile labours which to be sure you love, since you dare not abandon them. Ah, Lauretta! are these delicate hands made to cultivate the ground? Must the sun destroy the colour of that beautiful complexion? You, the charm of Nature, of all the Graces, all the Loves; you, Lauretta, will you wear yourself out in an obscure and toilsome life! to be closed in becoming the wife of some rude villager! to grow old perhaps in indigence, without having tasted any of those pleasures which ought to follow you perpetually! This is what you prefer to the delights of ease and affluence which I promise you. And on what do you found your resolution? On the fear of giving some moments of uneasiness to your father? Yes, your flight will afflict him; but afterwards, what will be his joy at seeing you rich by my favours, with which he also shall be loaded! What a pleasing violence will you not do him, in obliging him to quit his cottage, and give himself repose! For from that time I shall no longer have his denials to fear: my happiness, yours, and his, will be assured for ever.'

Lauretta had a good deal of difficulty to withstand the temptation, but she did withstand it: and but for the fatal accident which at last threw her again into the snare, the mere instinct of innocence would have sufficed to preserve her from it.

In a storm which fell on the village of Coulange, the hail destroyed all the promised vintages and harvests. The desolation was general. During the storm a thousand mournful cries mingled with the roaring of the winds and claps of thunder; but when the ravage was accomplished, and a light, more dreadful than the darkness which had preceded it, let them see the vine branches stripped and broken, the ears of corn hanging on their shattered stalks, the fruits of the trees beaten down or blasted, nothing prevailed throughout the desolated country but one vast and doleful silence: the roads were covered with a crowd of unfortunate people, pale, struck with consternation, and immoveable; who, with a melancholy eye, contemplating their ruin, bewailed the loss of the year, and saw nothing to come but despair, misery, and death. On the thresholds of the cottages, the disconsolate mothers pressed against their bosoms their tender nurslings, exclaiming, with tears in their eyes, 'Who will give suck to you if we want bread?'

At the sight of this calamity, the first thought which occurred to Luzy was the distress of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he veiled the tender interest he took in their fortunes under a pretext of common pity to this multitude of wretches. 'Let us go to the village,' said he to his company; 'let us carry consolation thither. It will be but little expense to each of us, to save twenty families from the despair into which this disaster has plunged them. We have partaken their joy, let us go and partake of their grief.'

These words made an impression on their hearts, already moved by pity. The Marquis de Clancé set the example. He presented himself to the peasants, offered them assistance, promised them relief, and restored them to hope and courage. While tears of gratitude flowed around him, his company, of both sexes, dispersed themselves through the village, entered the straw huts, distributed their

gifts, and tasted the rare and sensible delight of seeing themselves adored by a grateful people. In the mean time Lusy ran like a madman, seeking the abode of Lauretta. It was shown him: he flies thither, and sees a countryman sitting at the door, his head inclined on his knees, and covering his face with both his hands, as if he feared to see the light again.—This was Lauretta's father. 'My friend,' said the count to him, 'I see you are in consternation; but do not despair: Heaven is just, and there are compassionate hearts among mankind.'—'Ah, sir,' replied the villager, lifting up his head, 'is it for a man who, after having served his country twenty years, retired covered with wounds, and who has never since ceased to labour without relaxation, is it for him to stretch out his hand for charity? Ought not the earth, which is bedewed with my sweat, to give me subsistence? Shall I end my life by begging my bread?' A soul so lofty and so noble, in an obscure person, astonished the count. 'You have served then?' said he. 'Yes, sir, I took up arms under Berwick; I made the campaigns of Maurice. My father, before an unfortunate lawsuit had stripped him of his estate, had sufficient to support me in the rank to which I was arrived. But at the same time that I was reduced, he was undone. We came here to conceal ourselves; and out of the wreck of our fortune we purchased a little farm, which I cultivated with my own hands. Our former condition was unknown, and this latter, to which I seemed born, gave me no shame. I maintained and consoled my father. I married; there was my misfortune; and it is now that I feel it.'—'Your father is dead?'—'Alas! yes.'—'Your wife?'—'She is happy in not having seen this dismal day.'—'Have you a family?'—'I have but one daughter, and the poor girl! . . . . Do not you hear her sighs? She hides herself, and keeps at a distance from me, that she may not distract my soul.' Lusy would

fain have rushed into the cottage, where Lauretta was mourning; but he restrained himself, for fear of a discovery.

'Here,' said he to the father, giving him his purse: 'this assistance is very small: but when you want, remember the Count de Luzy. I live at Paris.' On saying these words he went away, without giving Lauretta's father time to return him thanks.

What was the astonishment of the good old Basil, on finding a considerable sum in the purse! Fifty louis, more than triple the revenue of his little vineyard! 'Come hither, my child,' cried he; 'look at him who goes yonder; it is not a man, it is an angel from heaven. But I am deceived. It is not possible that he should intend to give me so much. Go, Lauretta, run after him, and let him see that he has committed a mistake.' Lauretta flies after Luzy, and having overtaken him, 'My father,' said she to him, 'cannot believe that you intended to make us so great a present. He sends me to return it to you.'—'Ah, Lauretta, is not all that I have at your and your father's disposal? Can I pay him too richly for having given birth to you? Carry back this poor gift: it is only an earnest of my good will: but carefully conceal from him him the motive: tell him only that I am too happy in obliging a man of worth.' Lauretta was about to return him thanks. 'To-morrow,' said he to her, 'at break of day, as I pass the end of the village, I will receive, if you please, your thanks with your adieus.'—'What! do you go away to-morrow?'—'Yes, I go away the most passionate lover, and most unhappy of men.'—'At break of day? That is about the hour when my father and I go out to work.'—'Together?'—'No; he goes first: I have the care of the house upon me, and that delays me a little.'—'And do you pass my road?'—'I cross it above the village; but were it necessary to go out of my way, it is certainly the least that I owe you

for so many marks of friendship.'—'Adieu, then, Lauretta, till to-morrow.—Let me see you, though but for a moment: that pleasure will be the last of my life.'

Basil, at Lauretta's return, had no more doubt of Lusy's benefactions. 'Ah, the good young man! Ah! excellent heart!' cried he every instant. 'However, daughter, let us not neglect what the hail has left us. The less there is of it, the more care we must take of what is left.'

Lauretta was so touched with the count's goodness, so afflicted at being the cause of his unhappiness, that she wept all the night.—'Ah, if it were not for my father,' said she, 'what pleasure should I have had in following him!' The next day she did not put on her holiday clothes; but notwithstanding the extreme simplicity of her dress, she forgot not to mingle in it a little coquetry natural to her age. 'I shall see him no more: what does it signify whether I am more or less handsome in his eyes? For one moment it is not worth the trouble.' On saying these words, she adjusted her cap and her tucker. She bethought her of carrying him some fruit in her breakfast-basket. 'He will not despise them,' said she: 'I will tell him that I have gathered them.' And while she ranged the fruit on a bed of vine-leaves, she bedewed them with her tears. Her father was already set out; and with the grey light of the dawn was already mingled that gentle tint of gold and purple diffused by Aurora, when the poor girl, with a distracted heart, arrived alone at the end of the village. The instant after, she saw the count's post-coach appear, and at that sight she was troubled. The moment that he saw her, Lusy leaped out of his carriage; and coming towards her with an air of sorrow, 'I am penetrated, beautiful Lauretta,' said he to her, 'with the favour which you do me. I have at least the consolation to see you sensible of my pain, and I can believe that you are sorry at having made me

unhappy.'—'I am distressed at it,' replied Lauretta, and would give all the wealth you have bestowed on us never to have seen you.'—'And I, Lauretta, I would give all I have never to quit you as long as I live.'—'Alas! I should think it depended only on yourself: my father could refuse you nothing: he loves you, he reveres you.'—'Fathers are cruel; they would have us marry: and I cannot marry you; let us think no more of it: we are going to leave each other, to bid an eternal adieu: we who never, if you had been inclined to it, would have ceased to live for one another, to love each other, to enjoy together all the gifts which fortune has bestowed on me, and all those which love has conferred on you. Ah! you have no conception of the pleasures which awaited us. If you had any idea of them! If you knew what you renounce!'—'Why, without knowing them I feel them. Be assured, that ever since I have seen you, every thing that is not you, is nothing to me. At first my mind was dazzled with the fine things which you had promised me: but since all that is vanished, I have thought of it no longer, I have thought only of you. Ah, if my father would agree to it!'—'What occasion for his agreeing to it! Do you wait for his consent to love me? Does not our happiness depend on ourselves? Love, fidelity, Lauretta, these are your titles, and my securities. Are there any more sacred, more inviolable? Ah! believe me, when the heart is bestowed, every thing is over, and the hand has only to follow it. Give me then that hand, that I may kiss it a thousand times, that I may bedew it with my tears.'—'There it is,' said she, weeping. 'It is mine,' cried he, 'this dear hand is mine, I hold it of love: to take it from me, they must take my life. Yes, Lauretta, I shall die at your feet, if we must part.' Lauretta really believed that he would literally die on losing her. 'Alas!' said she, 'and shall I be the cause?'—'Yes, cruel girl, you will be the cause. You de-

sire my death, you do.'—'Oh, heaven! no: I would lay down my life for you.'—'Prove it then,' said he, doing her at the same time a kind of violence, 'and follow me if you love me.'—'No,' said she, 'I cannot, I cannot without the consent of my father.'—'Very well, leave—leave me then to my despair.' At these words Lauretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced with sorrow and fear, dared neither to hold Luzy's hand, nor let it go. Her eyes, full of tears, followed with terror the distracted looks of the count. 'Deign,' said she to him, in order to appease him, 'deign to pity me, and to see me without anger. I hoped this testimony of my gratitude would have been agreeable to you; but I dare no longer offer it you.'—'What is it?' said he: 'Fruit, and for me! Ah, you little tyrant, you insult me. Give me poison.' And throwing down the basket, he retired in a rage.

Lauretta took that emotion for hatred, and her heart, already too much softened, could not support this last attack. Scarce had she strength to get away a few paces, and faint at the foot of a tree. Luzy, who followed her with his eyes, runs up and finds her bathed with tears, her bosom choked with sobs, pale, and almost lifeless. He is distressed; he thinks at first only of recalling her to life: but soon as he sees her spirits return, he avails himself of her weakness, and before she is well recovered of her swooning, she is already at a great distance from the village, in the count's coach, and in the arms of her ravisher. 'Where am I?' said she, on opening her eyes. 'Ah, my lord count, is it you? Are you carrying me back to the village?'—'Dearest half of my soul,' said he to her, pressing her against his bosom, 'I have lived to see the moment when our adieus almost cost us both our lives. Let us put no more to that trial two hearts too weak to sustain it.

'I resign myself to thee, my dear Lauretta; on thy lips I swear to live for thee alone.'—'I ask no

better lot,' said she to him, 'than to live also for you alone. But my father! Shall I leave my father? Has not he a right to dispose of me?'—'Thy father, my Lauretta, shall be loaded with riches; he shall partake the happiness of his daughter: we will be both his children. Depend on my tenderness to ease and console him.—Come, let me catch those tears, let me drop my own into thy bosom: they are the tears of joy, the tears of pleasure.' The dangerous Luzy mingled with his language all the charms of seduction, and Lauretta was not insensible: while her father, uneasy, afflicted, seeking his daughter, calling on her with loud cries, asked after her through the whole village; and not seeing her again in the evening, and retiring distressed, in despair at having lost her, that image presents itself to his mind, wholly occupies it, and troubles it without ceasing. It was necessary to beguile his grief.

Luzy ran with his horses, the blinds of his carriage were let down, his people were sure and faithful, and Lauretta left behind her no trace of her flight. It was even essential to Luzy to conceal his having carried her off. He detached one of his domestics, who, from a village quite out of the road, contrived to transmit to the minister of Coulange this billet, in which Luzy had disguised his hand-writing. 'Tell Lauretta's father to be easy: that she is well, and that the lady, who has taken her with her, will have the same care of her as of her own child. In a short time he shall know what has become of her.'

This note, which was far from affording consolation to the father, served to palliate the crime of elopement to the daughter. Love had penetrated into her soul; he laid open the avenues of it to pleasure; and from that time the clouds of grief dispersed, the tears dried up, sorrow was appeased, and a transient, but profound oblivion of every thing but her lover, suffered her to taste,

without remorse, the criminal happiness of being his.

The kind of delirium, into which she fell on arriving at Paris, completed the dissipation of her soul. Her house was a fairy palace; every thing in it had the air of enchantment. The bath, the toilette, the supper, the delicious repose which love left her, were so many varied forms which voluptuousness assumed, to seduce her through the medium of her senses. When she waked, she thought herself still deceived by a dream. When she rose she saw herself surrounded with women, attentive to serve her, and jealous of pleasing her. She, who had only studied to obey, had only to desire in order to be obeyed. 'You are queen here,' said her lover, 'and I am your principal slave.'

Imagine, if it is possible, the surprise and transport of a young and simple country girl, at seeing her fine black hair, so negligently tied till that time, the wavy ringlets of which nature alone had formed, now rounding into curls beneath the ply of art, and rising in a diadem, bespangled with flowers and diamonds; at seeing displayed to her eyes the most gallant ornaments, which seemed to solicit her choice; at seeing, I say, her beauty issue, radiant as from a cloud, and spring up again in the brilliant pannels which environed her, in order to multiply her charms. Nature had lavished on her all her graces; but some of those gifts had need of being cultivated, and the accomplishments came in a crowd to dispute with each other the care of instructing her, and the glory of embellishing her. Luzy possessed and adored his conquest, intoxicated with joy and love.

In the mean time, the good Bazil was the most unhappy of fathers. Brave, full of honour, and, above all, jealous of his daughter's reputation; he had sought her, expected her in vain, without publishing his uneasiness: and nobody in the village

was made acquainted with his misfortune. The minister came to assure him of it himself, by communicating to him the note which he had received Basil gave no credit to this note; but, dissembling with the pastor, 'My daughter is discreet,' said he to him, 'but she is young, simple, and credulous. Some lady has had a mind to take her into her service, and has prevailed on her to prevent my denial. Let us, for fear of scandal, hush up this little imprudence of youth, and leave the people to believe that my daughter quitted me with my own consent. The secret rests with you; spare the daughter and the father.' The minister, a prudent and worthy man, promised and kept silence. But Basil, devoured by chagrin, passed the days and nights in tears. 'What is become of her?' said he: 'Is it a lady that she has followed? Is there any so mad as to rob a father of his daughter, and to undertake to carry her off? No, no, it is some ravisher who has seduced and ruined her. Ah, if I can discover him, either his blood or mine shall wash out my injury.' He went himself to the village, whence they had brought the note. By the minister's informations he contrived to discover the person who had been charged with the message he examined him; but his answers only confused him the more. The very situation of the place served only to mislead him. It was six leagues out of the road which Lucy had taken, and lay quite across the country. But had Basil even combined the two circumstances of the departure of the count and his daughter's elopement, he would never have suspected so virtuous a young man. As he confided his grief to nobody, nobody could give him any light. He groaned therefore within himself, in expectation of some casual gleam to clear up his suspicions. 'Oh, Heaven,' said he, 'it was in your wrath that you gave her to me! And I, mad as I was, congratulated myself

on seeing her grow up and improve! What formed my pride, now constitutes my shame. Oh, that she had died as soon as she was born!'

Lauretta endeavoured to persuade herself that her father was easy, and the regret of having left him touched her but faintly. Love, vanity, a taste for pleasures, a taste ever so lively in its birth, the care of cultivating her talents; in short, a thousand amusements, continually varied, divided her life, and filled her soul. Luzy, who loved her to idolatry, and who feared lest he should lose her, exposed her as little as possible in public: but he contrived her all the means which mystery has invented of being invisible amidst the great world. This was enough for Lauretta: happy in pleasing him whom she loved, she felt not that restless desire, that want of being seen and admired, which alone brings out so many handsome women to our spectacles and gardens. Though Luzy, by the choice of a small circle of amiable men, rendered his suppers amusing, she was taken up at them only with him; and she was able to convince him of it without disobliging any body else. The art of reconciling partialities to good manners, is the secret of delicate souls; coquetry studies it; love knows it without having learnt it.

Six months passed away in that union, that sweet intelligence of two hearts filled and ravished with each other, without weariness, without uneasiness, without any other jealousy than that which makes us fear that we do not please so much as we love, and which renders us desirous of combining every thing that can captivate a heart.

In this interval Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, with presents from the lady who had taken her into friendship. It was to the minister that Luzy directed. Remitted to the next post to the village by a faithful servant, the packets came to hand anonymous; Basil could not tell to whom to send them back; and

then his refusals would have created doubts of what he wished to be believed, and he trembled lest the curate should have the same suspicions with himself. 'Alas!' said the good father to himself, 'my daughter is, perhaps, yet virtuous. Appearances accuse her; but they are only appearances: and though my suspicions should be just, I must lament, but I ought not to dishonour my child.'

Heaven owed some consolation to the virtue of this worthy father; and it was Heaven, without doubt, which brought about the accident I am going to relate.

The little wine trade which Basil carried on obliged him to come to Paris. As he was traversing that immense city, he was stopped in the street by some carriages crossing each other. The voice of a lady in a fright engaged his attention. He sees . . . He dares not believe his eyes . . . . Lauretta, his daughter, in a gilt glass chariot, superbly dressed, and crowned with diamonds. Her father would not have known her, if, perceiving him herself, surprise and confusion had not made her shrink back and cover her face. At the movement which she made to hide herself, and still more at the cry which escaped her, he could not doubt but it was she. While the carriages which were locked together were disengaging, Basil slips between the wall and his daughter's chariot, gets up to the step of the chariot door, and with a severe tone, says to Lauretta, 'Where do you live?' Lauretta, seized with fear and trembling, tells him her habitation. 'And what name do you go by?' —'*Coulange*,' replied she, looking down, 'from the place of my birth.'—'Of your birth! Ah, wretch! . . . This evening, at dusk, be at home, and alone.' At these words he gets down, and pursues his way.

The shock which Lauretta had received was not yet overcome, when she found herself at home.

Lusy supped in the country. She was left to herself at the moment when she had most need of counsel and support. She was going to appear before her father, whom she had betrayed, forsaken, and overwhelmed with grief and shame: her crime then presented itself to her in the most odious form. She began to feel the vileness of her condition. The intoxication of love, the charms of pleasure, had banished the thought; but as soon as the veil was fallen off, she saw herself such as she was in the eyes of the world, and in the eyes of her father. Terrified at the examination and sentence which she was about to undergo, 'Wretch!' cried she, melting into tears, 'where can I fly? Where can I hide me? My father, honesty itself, again finds me, gone astray, abandoned to vice, with a man who is nothing to me! O my father! O terrible judge! how shall I appear before you?' It came more than once into her mind to avoid him and disappear; but vice had not yet effaced from her soul the holy laws of nature. 'I, to reduce him to despair,' said she; 'and after having merited his reproaches to draw his curse upon me! No, though unworthy the name of his daughter, I revere that sacred name. Though he came to kill me with his own hand, I ought to wait it, and to fall at his feet. But, no, a father is always a father. Mine will be touched with my tears. My age, my weakness, the count's love, his favours, all plead for me; and when Lusy shall speak, I shall no longer be so culpable.'

She would have been distressed if her people had been witnesses of the humiliating scene which was preparing. By good luck she had given out that she supped with a friend, and her women had made themselves a holiday that evening. It was easy to her to get rid of two footmen who attended her, and when her father arrived, she received him herself.

'Are you alone?'—'Yes, sir.' He enters with

emotion, and after having looked her in the face, in a sorrowful and melancholy silence, 'What business have you here?' said he. Lauretta answered by throwing herself at his feet, and bathing them with her tears. 'I see,' said the father, casting his eyes around him, 'in this apartment where every thing bespeaks riches and luxury, I see that vice is at its ease in this town. May I know who has taken care to enrich you in so short a time, and from whom came this furniture, these clothes, that fine equipage in which I saw you?' Lauretta still replied only by tears and sighs. 'Speak to me,' said he, 'you shall weep afterwards; you will have time enough.'

At the recital of her story, of which she disguised nothing, Basil passed from astonishment to indignation. 'Lusy!' said he, 'that worthy man! . . . . . These then are the virtues of the great! The base wretch! In giving me his gold, did he think he paid me for my daughter? These proud rich folks think, that the honour of the poor is a thing of no value, and that misery sets itself to sale. He flattered himself with consoling me! He promised you to do it! Unnatural man! how little does he know the soul of a father! No, ever since I lost thee, I have not had one moment without sorrow, not one quarter of an hour of peaceful sleep. By day, the ground which I cultivated was watered with my tears: in the night, while you forgot yourself, while you were losing yourself in guilty pleasures, your father, stretched on his straw, tore his hair, and called on you with loud cries. Ah, what! Have my groans never re-echoed to thy soul? Has the image of a father distressed never presented itself to your thought, never troubled your repose?'—'Oh! Heaven is my witness,' said she, 'that if ever I had thought I had occasioned you so much sorrow, I would have quitted every thing to fly to your arms. I revere you, I love you, I love you more than ever. Alas!

what a father have I afflicted! At this very instant, when I expected to find in you an inexorable judge, I hear from your own mouth only reproaches full of gentleness. Ah, my father! when I fell at your feet I felt only shame and fear; but now it is with affection that you see me penetrated, and to the tears of repentance are joined those of love!'—'Ah! I revive; I now find my daughter again,' cried Basil, raising her up. 'Your daughter, alas!' said Lauretta, 'she is no longer worthy of you.'—'No, do not discourage thyself. Honour, Lauretta, is without doubt a great happiness; innocence a greater still; and if I had the choice, I would rather have seen thee deprived of life. But when innocence and honour are lost, there still remains one inestimable good; virtue, which never perishes, which we never lose without return. We have only to wish for it, it springs up again in the soul; and when we think it extinguished, a single touch of remorse gives birth to it anew. This will console you, daughter, for the loss of your innocence; and if your repentance be sincere, Heaven and your father are appeased. For the rest, nobody in the village knows your adventure; you may appear there again without shame.'—'Where, my father?'—'At Coulange, whither I am going to carry you.' (These words embarrassed Lauretta.) 'Haste,' continued Basil, 'to strip off those ornaments of vice. Plain linen, a simple bodice, a white petticoat, these are the raiments of thy condition. Leave his envenomed gifts to the wretch who has seduced you, and follow me without more delay.'

One must have been possessed at this moment of the timid and tender soul of Lauretta, must have loved, like her, a father and a lover, to conceive, to feel the combat which arose in her feeble heart, between love and nature. The trouble and agitation of her spirits kept her immoveable and mute. 'Let us go,' said the father; 'moments are

precious.'—'Pardon me,' cried Lauretta, falling again on her knees before him, 'pardon me, my father: be not offended if I am slow to obey you. You have read the bottom of my soul. Luzy wants the name of husband; but all the rights which the tenderest love can give him he has over me. I would fly him, detach myself from him, follow you, though to death. But to steal away in his absence, to leave him to believe that I have betrayed him!'—'How, wretch! and what signifies to you the opinion of a vile deceiver? and what are the rights of a passion which has ruined and dishonoured you? You love him! you love your shame then. You prefer his vile favours to the innocence which he has robbed you of? You prefer to your father the most cruel of your enemies? You dare not fly him in his absence, and quit him without his consent! Ah! when you were to quit your father, to overwhelm him, to drive him to distraction, you were not then so timorous. And what do you expect from your ravisher? That he should defend you? That he should withdraw you from paternal authority? Oh! let him come; let him dare to drive me hence: I am alone, unarmed, enfeebled by age; but they shall see me extended on the threshold of your door, calling for vengeance to God and man. Your lover himself, in order to get at thee, shall march over my body, and passers-by shall say with horror, There is the father whom she disavows, and whom her lover tramples under his feet.'

'Ah, my father!' said Lauretta, terrified at this image, 'how little do you know the man whom you rail against so cruelly! Nothing is gentler, nothing more sensible. You will be to him respectable and sacred.'—'Dare you talk to me of the respect of one who dishonours me? Dost thou hope that he may seduce me with his perfidious gentleness? I will not see him: if you can answer for him, I cannot answer for myself.'—

'Well, do not see him, but permit me to see him, but for a moment.'—'What do you ask? me to leave you alone with him! Ah! though he should take away my life, I would not show him that complaisance. While he was able to keep you from me it was his crime, it was thine, I was not answerable for it. But Heaven now puts you again under my guard, and from this moment I answer to Heaven for thee. Let us go, daughter, it is already dark; this is the instant for us to depart! resolve: renounce thy father, or obey.'—'You pierce my heart.'—'Obey, I tell thee, or dread my curse.' At these terrible words, the trembling Lauretta had no strength to reply. She undresses herself before her father's eyes, and puts on, not without a flood of tears, the plain dress which he had prescribed to her. 'My father,' said she to him, at the moment she was preparing to follow him, 'dare I ask, as the price of my obedience, one single favour? You do not wish the death of him whom I sacrifice to you. Suffer me to write him two words, to inform him it is you that I obey, and that you oblige me to follow you.'—'What! that he may come to carry you off again, to steal you from me? No, I will leave no trace of you. Let him die of shame, he will do justice upon himself: but of love! never fear that; libertines never die of it.' Then taking his daughter by the hand, he carried her out without noise; and the next morning, embarking on the Seine, they returned into their own country.

At midnight the count arrives at his house, where he flatters himself pleasure awaits, and love invites him, and finds all there in alarm and confusion.

Lauretta's people tell him with fright that they do not know what is become of her; that they have sought her in vain; that she had taken care to send them out of the way, and had seized that moment to elude their vigilance; that she did not

sup at her friend's; and that on going off she had left every thing behind her, even to her diamonds, and to the gown she had worn that day.

'We must wait for her,' said Luzy, after a long silence. 'Do not go to bed: there is something incomprehensible in this affair.'

Love, which seeks to flatter itself, began by conjectures to excuse Lauretta; but finding them all destitute of probability, he delivered himself up to the most cruel suspicions. 'An involuntary accident might have detained her; but in the absence of her people to undress herself, to make her escape alone, at dusk, to leave her house in uneasiness! all this,' said he, 'clearly shows a premeditated flight. Has Heaven touched her? Is it remorse that has determined her to fly me? Ah! why can I not at least believe it! but if she had taken an honest part, she would have had pity on me, she would have written to me, though it were but two words, of consolation and adieu. Her letter would not have betrayed her, and would have spared me suspicions, grievous to me, and dishonourable to her. Lauretta, O Heaven! candour itself, innocence, truth! Lauretta unfaithful and perfidious! she who but this very morning .... No, no, it is incredible ... and yet it is but too true.' Every moment, every reflection seemed a new proof: but hope and confidence could not quit his heart. He struggled against persuasion, as an expiring man against death. 'If she were to return,' said he, 'if she were to return innocent and faithful! Ah, would my fortune, my life, all my love be sufficient to repair the injury I do her! What pleasure should I have in confessing myself in fault! With what transports, with what tears, would I efface the crime of having accused her! Alas! I dare not flatter myself with being unjust; I am not so happy.'

There is nobody who, in the uneasiness and ardour of expectation, has not sometimes experienced

at Paris the torment of listening to the noise of the coaches, each of which we take for that which we expect, and each of which by turns arrives, and carries away, as it passes, the hope which it has just excited. The unhappy Lusy was till three in the morning in this cruel perplexity. Every carriage which he heard was, perhaps, that which was bringing back Lauretta; at last hope, so often deceived, gave place to despair. 'I am betrayed,' said he, 'I can no longer doubt it. It is a plot which has been concealed from me. The caresses of the perfidious creature served only the better to disguise it. They have artfully chosen the day on which I was to sup in the country. She has left every thing behind her, to let me understand that she has no farther occasion for my presents. Another, without doubt, overwhelms her with them. She would have been ashamed to have had any thing of mine. The most feeble pledge of my love would have been a perpetual reproach of her treachery and ingratitude. She would forget me, in order to deliver herself up in peace to the man she prefers. Ah, the perjured wretch! does she hope to find any one who loves her like me? I loved her too well; I gave myself too much up to it. Her desires, by being perpetually prevented, became extinct. These are the ways of women. They grow tired of every thing, even of being happy. Ah! canst thou be so now, perfidious girl! Canst thou be so, and think of me? Of me! do I say? What signify to her my love and grief? Ah, while I can scarce restrain my cries, while I bathe her bed with my tears, another, perhaps . . . . . Horrible thought! I cannot support it. I will know this rival, and if the fire which burns in my breast has not consumed me before day, I will not die without vengeance. It is doubtless some one of those false friends whom I have imprudently introduced to her. Soligny, perhaps . . . . . He was taken with her, when

we saw her in her own village . . . . . She was simple and sincere then. How is she changed! He wanted to see her again, and I, poor easy fool! thinking myself beloved, believing it impossible for Lauretta to be unfaithful, brought my rival to her. I may be deceived, but in short it is he whom I suspect. I will be satisfied instantly. Follow me,' said he to one of his domestics; and it was scarce daylight when, knocking at the chevalier's door, Luzy asked to see him. 'He is not at home, sir,' said the Swiss. 'Not at home!'—'No, sir, he is in the country.'—'How long since?'—'Since yesterday evening.'—'At what hour?'—'About dusk.'—'And what part of the country is he gone to?'—'We do not know: he has taken only his valet-de-chambre with him.'—'In what carriage?'—'In his vis-à-vis.'—'Is his absence to be long?'—'He will not be back this fortnight, and has ordered me to take care of his letters.'—'At his return tell him that I was here, and that I desire to see him.'

'At last,' said he, on going away, 'I am convinced. Every thing agrees. Nothing remains but to discover where they have concealed themselves. I will tear her from his arms, the perfidious wretch! and I will have the pleasure of washing away with his blood my injury and her treachery!'

His researches were ineffectual. The chevalier's journey was a mystery which he could not penetrate. Luzy was therefore fifteen days on the rack; and the full persuasion that Soligny was the ravisher diverted him from every other idea.

In his impatience, he sent every morning to know if his rival was returned. At last he was told that he was just arrived. He flies to him, inflamed with anger; and the favourable reception given him by the chevalier only irritated him more. 'My dear count,' said Soligny, 'you have been very earnest in your inquiries for me; how can I

serve you?'—'In ridding me,' replied Lusy, at the same time turning pale, 'either of a life which I detest, or of a rival whom I hate. You have carried off my mistress; nothing remains but to pluck out my heart.'—'My friend,' said the chevalier to him, 'I have as great a desire to have my throat cut as yourself, for I am quite mad with vexation; but I have no quarrel with you: if you please, let us understand each other. Lauretta has been carried off, you say; I am very sorry for it; she was a charming girl; but upon honour it was not by me. Not that I pique myself on any delicacy in that point. In love I forgive my own friends, and allow myself these little petty-larcenies; and though I heartily love you, yet, if Lauretta had thought proper to deceive you for me, rather than for another, I should not have been cruel. But as to carrying them off, I don't like that, that is too serious a business for me; and if you have no other reason for killing me, I advise you to let me live, and to breakfast with me.' Though the chevalier's language had very much the air of frankness, Lusy still retained his suspicions. 'You disappeared,' said he, 'the same evening, at the same hour: you lay hid for a fortnight; I know besides that you loved her, and that you had an inclination for her at the very time that I took her.'

'You are in luck,' said Soligny, 'that in the humour I now am, I love you enough to come to an explanation. Lauretta went off the same evening with me; I have nothing to say to that: it is one of those critical rencounters which form the intrigue of romances. I thought Lauretta beautiful as an angel, and I had an inclination for her, it is true; but if you will cut the throats of all who are guilty of the same crime, mercy upon one half of Paris! The important article then is the secret of my journey, and absence? Very well, I will explain that matter.

'I was in love with Madam de Blanson, or rather

I was in love with her riches, her birth, her credit at court; for that woman has every thing in her favour, except herself. You know that if she is neither young nor handsome, to make amends she has a deal of sensibility, and is easily set on fire. I had got into her good graces, and saw no impossibility to be, as it is called, happy, without proceeding to marriage. But marriage was my point; and under cover of that respectful timidity, inseparable from a delicate love, I eluded all opportunities of making an ill use of her weakness. So much reserve disconcerted her. She never saw, she said, a man so timorous, and so much of the novice. I was as bashful as a young girl: my modesty absolutely tantalized her. In short, not to trouble you with all the arts I employed for three months to sustain attacks without surrendering, never did coquette strive so much to kindle ineffectual desires. My conduct was a master-piece of prudence and dexterity: but the widow was too hard for me. I am her dupe: yes, my friend, she has surprised my credulous innocence. Seeing that she must attack me regularly, she talked of marriage. Nothing was more advantageous than her proposals. Her fortune was to be entirely in my power. There remained only one bar to our happiness. I was very young, and she was not sufficiently acquainted with my character. In order to try one another, she proposed to me to pass some days together, *tête-à-tête*, in the country. 'A fortnight's solitude and liberty,' said she, 'will give us a truer idea of each other than two years at Paris.' I gave into the snare, and she managed so well that I forgot my resolution. How frail is man, and how little certain of himself! Having taken up the part of husband, I was obliged to maintain it, and I gave her the best opinion of me that I possibly could; but in a short time she thought she perceived that my love abated. It was in vain that I protested it was the same; she told me that she was not to be deceived

with empty words, and that she plainly saw the change in me. In short, this morning I received my discharge in form from under her own hands. It runs in these words: 'The slender trial which I have made of your sentiments is sufficient. Begone, sir, whenever you please. I would have a husband whose attentions should never relax; who loves me always, and always the same.' Are you satisfied? There is my adventure.—You see it is quite of a different nature from that which you attribute to me. I have been carried off, as well as your Lauretta; Heaven grant that they have not done by her as they did by me! But now you are undeceived with respect to me, have you no other suspicion?—'I am lost in them,' said Luzy: 'forgive my sorrow, my despair, and my love, the step which I have just taken.'—'Pshaw!' replied Soligny: 'nothing was more just. If I had taken away your mistress, I must have given you satisfaction. There is nothing in it; so much the better: and so we are good friends. Will you breakfast with me?'—'I would die.'—'That would be going rather too far. Preserve that remedy for more serious disgraces. Lauretta is a pretty girl, though a little knavish baggage; endeavour to see her again; but if you cannot get her, take another, and the sooner the better.'

While Luzy remained inconsolable, and was scattering his money with a liberal hand, in order to discover some traces of Lauretta, she was at her father's lamenting her error, or rather her lover.

Bazil had given out in the village that he had not been able to live without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her home. They found her still improved. Her graces were now blown; and that which is called the air of Paris had given her new charms, even in the eyes of the villagers. The ardour of the youths who had sought her was renewed, and became still more lively. But her father refused them all. 'You shall never marry

in my lifetime,' said he. 'I would not impose upon any one. Work and lament with me. I have just sent back to your unworthy lover all his presents. We owe him nothing now, except our shame.'

Lauretta, humble and submissive, obeyed her father without complaining, and without daring to raise her eyes towards him. It was to her an incredible difficulty to resume the habitude of indigence and labour. Her feet, grown tender, were wounded; her delicate hands were made sore; but these were slight evils. 'The pains of the body are nothing,' said she, groaning; 'those of the soul are much more grievous.'

Though Lucy was perpetually present to her, and her heart was not able to detach itself from him, she had no longer either the hope or desire of returning to him. She knew what bitterness her going astray had diffused over the life of her unhappy father; and though she had been at liberty to quit him again, she would not have consented to it. But the image of the grief, in which she had left her lover, pursued her, and was her torment. The right he had to accuse her of perfidy and ingratitude, was a fresh cause of anguish.—'If I could but write to him! But I have neither the liberty nor the means. Not content with obliging me to abandon him, they would have me forget him. I shall sooner forget myself; and it is as impossible for me to hate him as to forget him. If he was culpable, his love was the cause, and I cannot punish him for it. In all that he did he meant only my happiness and my father's. He deceived himself; he led me astray: but at his age one thinks only of love. Yes, I owe it to him, I owe it to myself, to clear up my conduct; and in that point alone my father shall not be obeyed.' The difficulty now was only to procure the means of writing; but her father, without intending it, had spared her the trouble.

One evening Luzy, retiring more afflicted than ever, received an anonymous packet. The hand in which the direction was written was unknown to him; but the post-mark told him enough. He opens it with precipitation; he discovers the purse which he had given Basil, with the fifty louis which he had left in it, and two like sums which he had sent to him. 'I see the whole affair,' said he; 'I have been discovered. The father in indignation sends me back my presents. Haughty and severe, as I perceived him. As soon as he knew where his daughter was, he came to fetch her, and forced her to follow him.' That moment he assembles such of his domestics as attended Lauretta. He examines them, he asks if any one among them had not seen with her a countryman, whom he describes to them. One of them actually remembers, that the very day that she went away, a man, exactly like the person he describes, got up to the boot of Lauretta's coach, and spoke to her for a moment. Come quickly,' cried Luzy, 'put post-horses to my chaise!'

The second night, being arrived at some leagues from Coulange, he causes the servant who attended him to disguise himself like a peasant, sends him to get information, and in the meanwhile endeavours to take rest. Alas! there is none for the soul of a lover in so violent a situation. He counts the minutes from the departure of his emissary to his return.

'Sir,' said the servant, 'good news! Lauretta is at Coulange, at her father's.'—'Ah, I breathe again.'—'They talk even of marrying her.'—'Of marrying her!—I must see her.'—'You will find her in the vineyard: she works there all day.'—'Just Heaven! what hardship! Come, I will lie concealed; and you, under that disguise, shall watch the moment when she is alone. Let us not lose an instant: away!'

Luzy's emissary had told him truth. A rich per-

son in his situation had offered himself as a match for Lauretta; and the minister had sent to Basil to persuade him to accept it.

In the mean time, Lauretta toiled in the vineyard, and thought of the unhappy Luzy. Luzy arrives, and perceives her at a distance: he advances with precaution, sees her alone, runs up, throws himself before her, and stretches out his arms. At the noise which he made across the vine-leaves, she raises her head, and turns her eyes: 'My God!' cried she . . . . Surprise and joy took from her the use of her voice. She was in his arms all trembling, without having been able to mention his name. 'Ah, Luzy,' said she, at last, 'is it you? This is what I asked of Heaven. I am innocent in your eyes: that is enough; I will endure the rest. Adieu, Luzy, adieu for ever! Begone; and lament your Lauretta. She reproaches you with nothing. You will be dear to her to her last breath.'—'I,' cried he, locking her in his arms, as if they were about to tear her from him again, 'I quit you! Thou half of myself, I live without thee, far from thee! No, there is not that power on earth that shall separate us.'—'There is one which is sacred to me—the will of my father. Ah, my lost friend! If you had known the profound grief into which my flight plunged him, sensible and good as you are, you would have restored me to his tears. To take me away from him a second time, or to plunge a dagger into his bosom, would be to me the same thing. You know me too well to require it of me; you are too humane to wish it yourself. Cast away a hope which I have lost; adieu. Heaven grant that I may expiate my fault! But I can scarce reproach myself for it. Adieu, I say; my father is coming: it would be dreadful that he should find us together.'—'It is what I would have,' said Luzy: 'I wait for him.'—'Ah, are you now going to redouble my sorrows!'

At that instant Basil arrives; and Luzy, ad-

vancing some paces to meet him, throws himself at his feet. 'Who are you? What do you want?' said Bazil, astonished at first. But as soon as he had fixed his eyes on him, 'Wretch!' cried he, drawing back, 'begone; take yourself away from my sight.'—'No, I shall die at your feet, if you will not vouchsafe to hear me.'—'After having ruined, dishonoured the daughter, dare you present yourself to the father?'—'I am to blame, I confess, and here are the means to punish me,' said he, presenting his sword. 'But if you will hear me, I hope that you will have compassion on me.'—'Ah,' said Bazil, looking at the sword, 'if I were as base, as cruel as you! . . . . See,' said he his daughter, 'how groveling is vice, and how great the shame of it, since it obliges a man to crouch at the feet of his fellow-creature, and to sustain his contempt.'—'If I were only vicious, replied Lusy haughtily, 'far from imploring you, I should brave you. Attribute my humiliation only to that which is the most honest and most noble cause in nature, to love, to virtue itself, to the desire which I have of expiating a fault, excusable perhaps, and with which I reproach myself so cruelly, only because I have a good heart.' Then, with all the eloquence of sentiment, he endeavoured to justify himself, attributing the whole to the warmth of youth, and the intoxication of passion.

'The world is very happy,' replied Bazil, 'that your passion has not been that of money! You would have been a Cartouche. (Lusy chafed at this discourse.) Yes, a Cartouche. And why not? Will you have the meanness to think that innocence and honour are of less value than riches and life? Have you not availed yourself of the weakness, the infirmity of this unhappy girl, in order to rob her of these two treasures? And me, her father, do you think you have done me a less injury than if you had murdered me? A Cartouche is broken on the

wheel, because he steals riches, with which we may dispense; but for you, who have taken from us a well educated girl, what a virtuous father cannot lose without dying, what have you merited? They call you noble, and you believe yourself so.—These are the marks of that nobility of which you are so vain. At a time of distress, when the most wicked of mankind would have had pity on me, you accost me, you pretend to pity me, and you say in your heart, 'There now is a wretch who has no other consolation in the world but his daughter: she is the only blessing Heaven has left him: and to-morrow I will carry her away from him.' Yes, barbarian! yes, villain! this is what passed in your soul. And I, poor credulous fool, I admired you, loaded you with blessings, and prayed Heaven to accomplish all your wishes; while all your wishes were to seduce my daughter! What do I say, wretch as I am! I delivered her up to you, I engaged her to run after you, in truth to restore to you that gold, that poison, with which you thought to corrupt me: it seemed as if Heaven had warned me that it was a destructive and treacherous gift; I resisted the impulse, and forced myself to believe you compassionate and generous; you were only perfidious and unpitying; and the hand which I would have kissed, which I would have watered with my tears, was preparing to pluck out my heart. Behold,' continued he, baring his bosom, and showing his scars, 'behold what a man you have dishonoured! I have shed for my country more blood than you have in all your veins: and you, sir, what are your exploits? Distressing a father, and debauching his daughter! empoisoning my days and hers! See there the unhappy victim of your seduction, see her there steeping in her tears her daily bread. Brought up in the simplicity of an innocent and laborious life, she loved it; she now detests it: you have rendered insupportable labour and poverty to her: she has

lost her joy with her innocence, and she can no longer lift up her eyes without blushing. But that which distracts me, that which I will never forgive you, is, that you have shut the heart of my daughter against me; you have extinguished the sentiments of nature in her soul: you have made the company of her father a torment to her; perhaps, alas! . . . I dare not speak it . . . perhaps I am her aversion.'

'Ah, my father!' cried Lauretta, who till then had remained in dejection and confusion. 'Ah, my father! this is punishing me too much. I merit every thing except the reproach of having ceased to love you.' On saying these words she fell at his feet, and kissed the dust of them. Luzy prostrated himself before him, and in an excess of tenderness, 'My father,' said he, 'pardon her, pardon me, embrace your children; and if the ravisher of Lauretta be not too unworthy of the name of her husband, I conjure you to grant me that title.'

This return would have softened a harder heart than Bazil's. 'If there were,' said he to Luzy, 'any other way of restoring to me my honour, and to both of you your innocence, I would refuse this. But it is the only one; I accept it, and much more for your sakes than for my own; for I neither expect, and will have nothing from you, and will die in cultivating my vineyard.'

The love of Luzy and Lauretta was consecrated at the foot of the altar. Many people said that he had done a mean thing, and he agreed to it: 'But it is not,' said he, 'that which they attribute to me. The shame was in doing the wrong, and not in repairing it.'

There was no way of engaging Bazil to quit his humble habitation. After having tried every art to draw him to Paris, Madam de Luzy obtained of her husband to purchase an estate near Coulange, and the good father consented at last to go there and spend his old age.

Two hearts formed for virtue were ravished in having recovered it. That image of celestial pleasures, the agreement of love and innocence, left them nothing more to desire, but to see the fruits of so sweet an union. Heaven heard the wish of nature; and Basil, before he died, embraced his grandchildren.

A WIFE OF TEN THOUSAND.

'ENJOY, madam, all the comforts of your house; do the honours, and be the delight of it; but never trouble your head about the conduct of it.' This, near eight years ago, was the language of the haughty Melidor to his wife. The advice was agreeable to follow; and accordingly the young and lively Acelia had pretty well followed it. But reason came with age; and the kind of intoxication, in which she had been plunged, vanished.

Melidor had had the misfortune of being born in opulence. Brought up among the young nobility of the kingdom, invested on entering into the world with a considerable charge, master of his wealth from the age of reason, it became to him the age of follies. His prevailing foible was to want to live like a man of quality. He made himself familiar with the great, carefully studied their manners; and as the noble and simple graces of a true courtier are not easy to imitate, it was to the airs of our little lords that he attached himself, as to good models.

He would have thought it a disgrace not to have been able to say, *My domains and my vassals:* he laid out, therefore, the better part of his ready money in the purchase of lands, the revenue of which was small indeed, but the rights whereof were magnificent.

He had heard say that the great lords had stewards who robbed them, creditors whom they did not pay, and mistresses who were not very faithful; he considered it therefore as beneath him to look into his accounts, to pay his debts, or to be delicate in love.

His eldest son had scarce attained his seventh year; he took particular care to choose him a governor that was self-sufficient, and a coxcomb, who

had no other merit than that of making a handsome bow.

This governor was the dependent of an humble friend of Melidor's, called Duranson, naturally an insolent, low fellow, a kind of dog, who barked at all passers-by, and caressed only his master. The part he acted was that of a misanthrope, full of arrogance and moroseness. Rich, but covetous, he found it convenient to have a good house which was not his own, and pleasures of every sort of which another bore the expense. A silent observer of all that passed, one might see him sunk in his armed chair, deciding on every thing with a few cutting words, and setting himself up as a family-censor. Woe to the good man who was not an object of fear! He tore him to pieces without mercy, if his air had displeased him ever so little.

Melidor took the moroseness of Duranson for philosophy. He was conscious that he was his hero; and the incense of a man of his character was to him a delicate perfume. The rough flatterer took care not to expose himself to the world. If he applauded Melidor in public, it was only with a glance, or a complaisant smile: he kept his panegyric for a *tête-à-tête;* but then he gave him a full meal of it. Melidor could scarce believe himself endowed with such eminent merit; but there must be something in it, for his friend Duranson, who assured him of it, was the farthest in the world from being a nauseous flatterer.

It was not enough to please the husband; Duranson had also flattered himself with seducing the young wife. He began by speaking well of her alone, and very ill of all others of her age and condition. But she was as little touched with his satires as his encomiums. He suspected that he was despised; he endeavoured to make himself dreaded; and by some malignant and sharp strokes he made her perceive that it was at any time in his power to be severe even on herself. That succeeded no

better. 'I may have foibles,' said she to him, 'and I allow them to be attacked, but at a little more distance, if you please. A perpetual censor would be almost as tiresome to me as a servile flatterer.'

By the resolute tone which she assumed, Duranson saw plainly that, in order to reduce her, he must go a little farther about. 'Let me endeavour,' said he, 'to make her stand in need of me: let me afflict her in order to console her; and when her wounded vanity shall throw her off her guard, I will seize one of those moments of disgust. The confidant of a woman's sorrows is often the happy avenger of them.'

'I pity you, madam,' said he, 'and I ought no longer to conceal from you what afflicts me sensibly. For some time past Melidor goes astray; he is guilty of follies; and if he goes on in this manner, he will no longer have occasion for such a friend as myself.'

Whether it was levity, or dissimulation with a man whom she did not esteem, Acelia received this information without deigning to appear moved. He dwelt upon it, made a merit of his own zeal, and declaimed against the caprices and irregularities of husbands of the age; said that he had made Melidor blush at it; and opposing the charms of Acelia to the dowdies which touched her husband, he grew so very warm, that he forgot his part, and soon betrayed himself. She smiled with disdain at the knave's want of address. 'That is what I call a friend,' said she; 'and not those base adulators, whom vice keeps in pay in order to flatter and serve it. I am very sure, for example, that you have told Melidor to his face all that you have just now said to me.'—'Yes, madam, and a great deal more.'—'You will then, to be sure, have the courage to reproach him with his wrongs before me; to overwhelm him with them.'—'Before you, madam! Ah, beware of making a noise: that would be to

alienate him irrecoverably. He is proud; he would be hurt at having cause to blush before you. He would consider me only as a perfidious friend. And who knows to what hidden motive he would impute our correspondence?'—'No matter; I will convict him, and confront him in you with a witness whom he cannot disprove.'—'No, madam, no; you will be undone. It is by dissembling wrongs that a woman governs: discretion, gentleness, and your charms—these are your advantages over us. Complaint and reproach only serve to exasperate us; and of all the methods of correcting, the worst is to put us to confusion.' He was in the right, but to no purpose. Acelia would hear nothing. 'I know,' said she, 'all my risk; but though it were to come to a rupture, I would not act, by my silence, the convenient woman to my husband.' He strove in vain to dissuade her; he was reduced to ask her pardon, and to entreat her not to punish him for a zeal which, perhaps, was imprudent. 'And this then,' said Acelia, 'is that courageous freedom of yours which nothing can intimidate? I shall be more discreet than you: but remember, Duranson, never hereafter to say any thing of your friends that you would not have them hear again. As to me, whatever injury my husband does me, I forbid you ever to speak to me about it.'

Duranson, enraged at so scurvy a reception, vowed the destruction of Acelia; but it was necessary first to involve her in the ruin of her husband.

Nobody at Paris has so many friends as an opulent and prodigal man. Melidor's friends, at his suppers, never failed to commend him to his face, and they had the kindness to wait till they were withdrawn from table, before they ridiculed him. His creditors, who daily increased, were not so complaisant; but his friend Duranson kept off the throng. He knew, he said, the way to impose on those knaves. However, as they were not all

equally timid, there was a necessity from time to time, in order to appease the most turbulent, to have recourse to expedients; and Duranson, under a fictitious name, coming to the succour of his friend, lent him money on pledges on the most usurious contracts.

The more Melidor's affairs became disordered, the less he wished to hear of them. 'Manage it,' said he to his steward, 'I will sign, but leave me at peace.' At last the steward came to tell him that his capital was exhausted, and his effects were going to be seised. Melidor fell on his agent, and told him he was a rogue. 'Call me what you please,' replied the cool steward; 'but you are in debt, and must pay, and because you fail, they are going to sue you.'

Melidor ordered the faithful Duranson to be called, and asked him if he had no resource.—'You have one very sure one: let your wife engage herself.'—'Ah! but will she consent to it?'—'To be sure! can she hesitate when your honour is at stake? However, do not alarm her; treat the matter as a trifle, and let her see in this engagement nothing more than a common form, which she cannot avoid fulfilling.' Melidor embraced his friend, and repaired to his wife.

Acelia, wholly devoted to her amusements, knew nothing of what passed. But happily heaven had endued her with a just way of thinking, and a firm soul. 'I am just come, madam,' said her husband, 'from seeing your new carriage: it will be exquisite. Your new horses are arrived: Ah, my dear, what a beautiful set! the count de Piss trains them. They are full of spirit; but he will break them: he is the best driver in all Paris.'

Though Acelia was accustomed to the gallantries of her husband, she could not help being surprised and pleased with this last. 'I ruin you!' said she. 'Prithee, my dear, what better use can I make of

my fortune than to employ them in what pleases you? Give a loose to your desires, and enjoy them at your ease. I have nothing which is not at your service: and I flatter myself that you think so. A propos,' added he carelessly, 'I have some deeds to settle, which the common forms of business will require you to sign. But we will talk of that this evening. At present I can think of nothing but the colour of your carriage; the varnisher only waits for your directions.'—'I will consider of it,' said she; and as soon as he was gone, she fell into reflections on what had passed between them.

Acelia was a rich heiress, and the law secured her the disposal of her fortune. She perceived the consequences of the engagement proposed to her; and in the evening, instead of going to the play, she went to her attorney. What was her surprise, on learning that Melidor was reduced to the most ruinous expedients! She employed the time of the play in getting intelligence and advice.

At her return she concealed her uneasiness before the company at supper; but when her husband, *tête-à-tête* with her, proposed to her to engage for him, 'I will not abandon you,' said she, 'if you will deign to trust yourself to me; but I require an entire confidence, a full power of ruling my house.'

Melidor was humbled at the thought of having his wife for a tutor; he told her that she had no reason to be alarmed, and that he would not suffer her to take so disagreeable a charge upon herself. 'No, sir, I have neglected it too long: it is a fault which I will no longer be guilty of.' He gave up the point, and the creditors being assembled the next day, 'Gentlemen,' said he to them, 'your visits are troublesome to me; my wife would be glad to talk with you; see and settle with her.'—'Gentlemen,' said Acelia to them, in a prudent, but assured tone, 'though my estate be my children's,

I am sensible that I ought to assist their father with it: but I will have it done fairly. Those who are honest shall find me punctual; but I will not satisfy knaves for the follies of a spendthrift. Bring me your demands to-morrow. I require only time to examine them; I will not let you wait.'

From the moment that Acelia saw herself at the head of her house, she was no longer the same woman. She cast her eyes on her past life, and saw nothing in it but the flutter of a thousand idle occupations. 'Are these,' said she, 'the duties of a mother of a family? Is it then at the price of her honour and of her peace, that she must pay for handsome suppers, rich equipages, and brilliant trifles?'

'Sir,' said she to her husband, 'to-morrow I shall have the state of your debts; I must have that of your revenues: order your steward to come to me.' The steward came and gave in his accounts. Nothing was more clear: far from having money in hand, it was found that he had advanced, and there was due to him above double the amount of his accumulated wages.—'I see,' said Acelia, 'that the steward understands his accounts better than we do. We have nothing to do but to pay him, thanking him at the same time that we are not more in his debt.'—'To pay him!' said Melidor in a low voice; 'and with what?'—'Out of my fund. The first step in economy is to turn off the steward.'

A reform was instantly made in the household, and in the expense; and Acelia setting the example, 'Courage, sir,' said she; 'let us cut to the quick: we sacrifice only our vanity.'—'But decency, madam!'—'Decency, sir, consists in not dissipating the substance of another, and the innocent enjoyment of one's own.'—'But, madam, at discharging your people you pay them; and that is exhausting our only resource.'—'Be easy, my dear: I have trinkets and diamonds, and by sacri-

ficing only these ornaments, I make myself one which is well worth them all.'

Next day the creditors arrive, and Acelia gives them audience. Those of whom Melidor had purchased moveables of value, or superfluous knick-knacks, consented to take them back again, with a fair allowance. The rest, enchanted with the reception and good intentions of Acelia, unanimously agreed to abide by her decisions; and her conciliatory graces united all minds.

One alone, with an air somewhat confused, said that he could not abate any thing. He had valuable effects in pledge; and on the list of monies borrowed, he was set down for an enormous usury. Acelia detained him by himself, in order to bend him if possible. 'I, madam!' said he, pressed by her reproaches; 'I come not here on my own account: and M. Duranson had better have excused me from playing this villanous part.'—'Duranson, say you! What! it is he who under your name...'—'He himself.'—'So our pledges are in his hands.'—'Yes, and a writing from me, in which I declare there is nothing due to me.'—'And may I have a duplicate of that writing?'—'Certainly, and presently if you will, for the name of an usurer sits heavy on me.' This was a weapon for Acelia; but it was not yet time to enlighten Melidor, and incense Duranson. She thought it necessary to dissemble some time longer.

Her lawyer, who came to see her, found that in twenty-four hours she had laid by a good part of her revenue, and discharged a multitude of debts. 'You proceed,' said he, 'upon good principles. Economy is of all resources the most sure, and the easiest. It enriches one in an instant with all the wealth that has been dissipated.'

While they were discoursing, Melidor in confusion afflicted himself at seeing his house stripped. 'Nay, sir,' said his wife, 'console yourself: I retrench nothing but your follies.' But he considered

only the world, and the humiliation of a fall. He retired in consternation, leaving Acelia with her lawyer.

A young woman has in business a prodigious advantage: besides inspiring hope and the desire of pleasing, she interests and disposes to a kind of easiness which men have not for one another. Nature contrives a secret intelligence between the two sexes. Every obstacle is removed before them, every difficulty vanishes; and instead of treating one another as enemies, like man to man, with a woman we deliver ourselves up as friends. Acelia was more than once a proof of it; and her lawyer exerted a zeal and affection in serving her, which he would not have had for her husband.

'Madam,' said he to her, on stating the balance of Melidor's estate with his debts, 'I find enough to acquit them. But effects sold in a hurry commonly go at a low price. Let us suppose that his are free: they will more than answer the two hundred thousand crowns which he owes; and if you will engage yourself for him, it is not impossible to reduce this multitude of ruinous debts to a small number of more simple and less burdensome articles.'—'Do it, sir,' said Acelia; 'I consent: I engage myself for my husband; but let it be without his knowledge.' The lawyer acted with prudence, and Acelia was authorised to contract in Melidor's name.

Melidor had acted openly with her in every article but one, which he had not dared to declare to his wife. In the night, Acelia, hearing him groan, endeavoured tenderly to comfort him. 'You do not know all,' said he; and these words were followed with a profound silence. Acelia pressed him in vain; shame stopped his mouth. 'What!' said she, 'have you sorrows which you dare not confide to me? have you a friend more tender, more sure, more indulgent?'—'The greater right you have to my esteem,' replied Melidor, 'the more I ought to

blush at the confession which I have yet to make to you. You have heard of the courtesan Eleonora . . . What shall I say to you? She has notes from me for upwards of fifty thousand crowns.' Acelia saw with joy the moment to regain the heart of her husband. 'It is not a time for reproaching you,' said she, 'with a folly of which you are ashamed, and to which my own dissipation has perhaps exposed you. Let us repair and forget our wrongs; this last is not without remedy.' Melidor had no conception that a woman, till that time so full of levity, should all of a sudden have acquired so much consideration. Acelia was not less surprised that a man, so haughty and vain, should suddenly become so modest. 'May it not be happy for us,' said they to each other, 'that we have fallen into misfortune?'

The next day, Acelia, having considered well, went in person to Eleonora's. 'You know not,' said she to her, 'who is come to see you? It is a rival.' And without farther preparation she told her name. 'Madam,' said Eleonora, 'I am confounded at the honour you do me. I am sensible I have done you wrong; but my condition must be my excuse. Melidor is to blame, and on seeing you I blame him myself: he is more unjust than I imagined.'—'Madam,' said Acelia, 'I complain neither of you nor of him. It is a punishment due to a thoughtless woman to have a libertine husband; and I have at least the pleasure of seeing that Melidor has still some delicacy in his taste. You have understanding, and appearance of decency and graces worthy to embellish virtue.'—'You view me, madam, with too much indulgence, which convinces me of the truth of what has been often told me, that the most virtuous women are not those who are most severe on us. As they have nothing to envy us, they have the goodness to pity us. Those who resemble us are much more rigid! they tear us to pieces, while they imitate us.'—'I

will tell you,' replied Acelia, meaning to bring her to her purpose, 'what we blame most in persons of your way of life; it is not that weakness for which so many women have cause to blush, but a passion still more odious. The fire of youth, the relish of pleasures, the attraction of a voluptuous and unconfined life, sometimes even sentiment itself (for I can believe you susceptible of it), all this may have its excuse; but in renouncing the modesty of a woman, you are at least the more obliged to have that of a man: and is there not a kind of honesty which you do not renounce?'—'Yes, without doubt.'—'Very well; tell me, then, does that honesty permit you to make an ill use of the intoxication and folly of a lover, to such a degree as to require, and to accept of his mad engagements, that are ruinous to his family? Melidor, for example, has given you notes for fifty thousand crowns; and do you perceive the consequence of them, and how much room there is to be severe against such a seduction?'—'Madam,' replied Eleonora, 'it was a voluntary gift; and M. Duranson can witness for me that I have refused much larger.'—'You know M. Duranson?'—'Yes, madam; it was he that put Melidor into my hands; and I was willing on that account to acquit him of all his own promises.'—'Very well: he has set down his own article then to his friend's account.'—'He told me so, and I imagined that Melidor had approved of it. As to the rest, Melidor was at his own liberty; I have nothing of his but what he has given me, and nothing in my opinion can be more fairly acquired.'—'You think so; but would you think so, if you were the child that is stripped for it? Put yourself in the place of a mother of a family, whose husband ruins her in this manner; who is on the point of seeing him dishonoured, pursued, driven from his house, deprived of his estate, obliged to conceal himself from the eyes of the world, and to leave his wife and children a prey to shame and grief; put

yourself for one moment in the place of that miserable and distressed woman, and judge yourself in that condition. What steps would not you take, mademoiselle? You would, without doubt, have recourse to the laws which superintend our morals. Your complaints and your tears would put in their claim against an odious surprise, and the voice of nature and of equity would rise up in your favour. Yes, mademoiselle, the laws would rage against poison; and the gift of pleasing is poison, when we make an ill use of it. It attacks not life, but it attacks reason and honour; and if, in the intoxication which it occasions, mad sacrifices are required and obtained of a man, what you call free gifts are in reality robberies. This is what any other would say, what you would say, perhaps, in my place yourself. But I am more moderate. There is somewhat due to you; I am come to pay you; but nobly, and not madly. It is six months that Melidor has been your lover, and in giving you a thousand guineas you will confess that he is magnificent.' Eleonora, softened and confounded, had not the courage to refuse. She took Melidor's notes, and followed Acelia to her lawyer.

'Would not you like,' said Acelia to her, on arriving there, 'an annuity of a hundred guineas, rather than this sum in hand, which will soon be dissipated? The way to detach one's-self from vice, child, is to set one's-self above want; and I am of opinion that you will one day be glad to have it in your power to be virtuous.'

Eleonora, kissing Acelia's hand, and letting fall some tears, 'Ah, madam,' said she, 'under your features how amiable and touching is virtue! If I have the happiness to return to it, my heart will owe that return to you.'

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia, informed her that the two hundred thousand crowns were ready in his hands, and that they waited her orders. She departed, transported with joy, and on seeing Me-

lidor again, 'There are your notes,' said she; 'it was very hard to part with them. Write no more so tender!' His friend Duranson was present; and by the dull air of Melidor, she plainly saw that he had made him ashamed of having resigned himself to his wife. 'You receive them very coldly,' said she to her husband, 'considering they come from so dear a hand.'—'Would you have me, madam, rejoice at being the talk of all Paris? They speak of nothing but my ruin; and you make it so very public, that my friends themselves are not able to deny it.'—'Your friends, then, sir, had some way of remedying it, without noise? They are come probably to offer you their credit, and their good offices? M. Duranson, for example . . . .'—'I, madam! I can do nothing; but I think that, without such a disgraceful publication, it would have been easy to find resources.'—'Yes, resources which leave none; my husband has made too much use of them: you know it better than any body. As for the disgrace which you affix to the publication of our misfortune, I know how great your delicacy is, and I esteem it as I ought.'—'Madam! I am an honest man, and it is well known.'—'It ought to be known, for you tell all the world of it; but as Melidor will have no more love-intrigues to form, your honesty grows useless.' Melidor, at these words, took fire himself, and told his wife that it was an affront to him to insult his friend. She was about to answer, but without deigning to hear her, he retired in a rage, and Duranson followed him.

Acelia was not the least shaken by this; and leaving them to conspire together, devoted herself to the care of her family. Her son's governor, since their failure, thought his office beneath him, and plainly told them his mind. He was discharged that very evening, and in his place came à good abbé, simple, modest, and sufficiently learned,

whom she entreated to be their friend, and to infuse his own morals into his pupil.

Melidor, whom Duranson had taught to consider the ascendant which his wife had assumed as the utmost mortification, was incensed at hearing that the governor was discharged. 'Yes, sir,' said she to him, 'I give my son the example and direction of a wise man instead of a coxcomb; I mean also to rid you of an insolent parasite, who makes you pay for his pleasures. These are the injuries I do you; I confess them, and you may make them public.'—'It is odious,' replied Melidor, without listening to her, 'it is odious to avail yourself of the condition to which I am reduced, to prescribe laws to me. No, madam, my misfortune is not such as to degrade me into your slave. It was your duty to enter into the engagement which I proposed to you: you have declined it; you are no longer dear to me, and your cares are useless. If I have run out, it was for you: the only remedy to my misfortune is to remove the cause; and to-morrow we separate.'—'No, sir, this is not the proper juncture. In a little time you shall peaceably enjoy a reputable fortune; you shall be free, and easy, and happy. Then, after having re-established your honour, and your peace, I shall see whether I ought to give place to the workers of your ruin, and to leave you, by way of punishment, at the brink of the abyss whence I am now going to draw you. Till then we are inseparable, and my duty and your misfortune are inviolable ties to me. For the rest, you shall judge to-morrow what a man he is whom you prefer to me. I will give you proofs of his perfidy, before his face, and I renounce all claim to your esteem, if he dares disavow them.'

Melidor, shaken by the generous firmness of Acelia, was distracted all night between anger and gratitude. But in the morning he received a letter

which threw him into despair. They writ to him, that nothing was talked of at court but his luxury, his extravagance, and the misfortune which was the fruit of it; that every body blamed him loudly; and that they proposed nothing less than to oblige him to quit his charge. 'Read,' said he, on seeing Acelia, 'read, madam, and tremble at the condition to which you have reduced me.'—'Oh, my friend,' said he to Duranson, who arrived just at that instant, 'I am undone: you foretold it to me. The bustle she has made dishonours me. They are taking away my place.' Duranson pretended to be overcome with the news. 'Be not afraid,' said Acelia to him; 'your security is good. You will lose nothing by it but the monstrous usury which you would extort from your friend. Yes, Melidor, he is our usurer, our lender upon pledges.'—'I, madam!'—'Yes, sir, you yourself, and I have the proof in my hands. There it is,' said she to her husband; 'but this is not all; this worthy friend made you pay Eleonora for the favours which he had received from her; he had the presumption to want to seduce your wife, by informing her of your amours, at the same time that he ruined you under a borrowed name.'—'Ah, this is too much!' said Duranson, and he rose to depart. 'One word more,' said Acelia to him. 'You shall be unmasked in an hour, known by the city and the court, and marked every where with infamy, if you do not this very instant carry to my lawyer's, where I am going to wait for you, both the pledges and the notes which you have of Melidor's.' Duranson turned pale, was confused, disappeared, and left Melidor confounded and immoveable with indignation and astonishment.

'Courage, my dear,' said Acelia to her husband. 'I answer for laying the storm. Adieu. This evening it shall be appeased.'

She repairs to the attorney's, becomes bound, receives the two hundred thousand crowns, dis-

charges his debts, tears the bills, beginning with those of Duranson, who had prudently done as he was ordered. From thence she takes a post-chaise, and repairs immediately to court.

The minister did not dissemble his discontent, nor the resolution which had been taken to oblige Melidor to sell his place. 'I do not attempt to excuse him,' said she: 'luxury is a folly in our situation, I confess; but it has been my folly rather than my husband's. His complaisance has been his only fault; and ah, sir, what will not men do for a wife whom they love? I was young and handsome in his eyes; my husband consulted my desires rather than his own means; he knew no fear, nor misfortune, but that of displeasing me: this was his imprudence; it is now repaired: he owes nothing more than my portion, and I make him the sacrifice of it.'—'What, madam!' cried the minister, 'have you become bound for him?' —'Yes, sir; who ought to repair his misfortune, but she who occasioned it? Yes, sir, I have engaged myself, but thereby I have acquired the right of managing his estate, and of ensuring my children's fortune. He does not know what I have done for him, and he allows me full power to dispose of every thing. I am at the head of my family, and the whole of it is already reduced to the most severe economy. Here, in two words, is what I have done, and what I propose to do.' She then entered into some details, which the minister was graciously pleased to hear. 'But,' continued she, 'the friendship, the esteem, the confidence of my husband, all is lost to me, if you punish him for a fault with which he must reproach me till I shall have effaced it. You are just, sensible, and humane: for what would you punish him? For having loved the other half of himself too much? for having forgot himself, and sacrificed himself for me? I shall then be odious to him; and he will have reason perpetually to repeat to my chil-

dren the error and dishonour into which their mother shall have plunged them. To whom would you make satisfaction by punishing him? To the public? Ah, sir! it is an envious and wicked public, unworthy of that complaisance. As to that part of the public which is indifferent and just, leave us to give it a sight much more useful, and more touching, than that of our ruin. It shall see that a discreet woman can reclaim an honest husband, and that there are, to well-disposed hearts, inexhaustible resources in courage and virtue. Our reformation will be an example; and if it be honourable to us to set it, it will be glorious to follow it; whereas, if the punishment of an imprudence which hurts us alone exceeds the fault and survives it, they will, perhaps, be incensed to no purpose, at seeing us unhappy without being criminal.'

The minister listened with astonishment. 'Far from being any obstacle to your intentions,' said he, 'madam, I will second them, even in punishing your husband. He must renounce all title to his place.'—'Ah, sir!'—'I have disposed of it in favour of your son, and it is out of regard, out of respect for you, that I leave the survivorship to the father.' Acelia's surprise, at obtaining from the minister a favour instead of a punishment, made her almost fall at his feet. 'Sir,' said she to him, 'it is worthy yourself to correct, in this manner, the father of a family. The tears which you see flow, are the expression of my gratitude. My children, my husband, and myself, shall never cease to bless you.'

Melidor waited Acelia with terror; and uneasiness gave place to joy, when he learnt with what gentleness his dissipation was punished. 'Well,' said Acelia, embracing him, 'are we to part to-day? Have you still any good friend whom you prefer to your wife?'

It is well known with what ease reports in Paris

are spread, and destroyed as soon as propagated: Melidor's misfortune had been the news of the day; his re-establishment, or rather the noble part which his wife had acted, caused a kind of revolution in people's minds, and in their conversation. They talked of nothing but the wisdom and resolution of Acelia; and when she appeared abroad, with the modest and free air of a person who neither braves nor fears the looks of the public, she was received with a respect which she had never before inspired. It was then that she perceived the value of the consideration which virtue gives; and the homages which had been paid to her youth and beauty had never flattered her so much.

Melidor, more timid, or more vain, knew not what air to assume, nor what countenance to wear. 'Let us wear,' said his wife, 'the air of confessing frankly, that we have been imprudent, and that we are become discreet. Nobody has any thing to reproach us with; let us not humiliate ourselves. If they see us glad of being amended, they will esteem us the more.'—'And with what eyes,' said he, 'will you look upon that multitude of false friends, who have abandoned us?'—'With the same eyes that I have always seen them, as people whom pleasure attracts, and who fly away at its departure. What right had you to depend upon them? Was it for them that your feasts were made? The house of a rich man is a theatre, in which every one thinks he has paid for his place, when he has filled it agreeably. The show ended, every one retires, acquitted of all demands on them. This is a disagreeable reflection; but in losing the illusion of being loved, you convert an agreeable error into an useful experience. And it is with this remedy, as with many others: the bitterness forms its efficacy. View them the world as it is, without being mortified at having mistaken it, without boasting that you know it better. Above all, let nobody be informed of our little quarrels:

let neither of us seem to have given way to the other: but let it appear, that the same spirit animates and actuates us both. Though it be not so great a shame as it is accounted, to suffer one's self to be guided by a wife, I would not have them know that it was I who determined you.'

Melidor owed every thing to his wife, but nothing touched him so sensibly as this mark of delicacy, and he was so ingenuous as to confess it. Acelia had another view besides flattering the vanity of her husband. She wanted to engage him, by his vanity itself, to follow the plan which she had traced out to him. 'If he sees all the world persuaded,' said she, 'that he has acted only according to his own pleasure, he will soon believe it himself, as well as the rest of the world: we stand to our own resolutions by this sentiment of liberty, which resists those of others; and the most essential point in the art of leading people, is that of concealing from them that they are led.' Acelia took care, therefore, to reflect on her husband those praises which were bestowed on her; and Melidor, on his side, spoke of her with nothing but esteem.

However, she dreaded, on his account, the solitude and silence of her house. There is no keeping in a man who grows dull and weary; and before Melidor could fall into some employment, it was necessary he should have amusements. Acelia took care to form for him a society, not numerous but well chosen. 'I invite you not to a feast,' said she to the ladies whom she engaged; 'but instead of pomp, we shall have pleasure. I will give you a hearty supper, which shall cost nothing; we will there drink in freedom to the health of our friends; perhaps, also, we shall laugh there, a circumstance uncommon enough in the world.' She kept her promise; and her husband alone still regretted the opulence in which he had lived. Not that he did not try to accustom himself to a plain

way of life; but one would have thought that the same void had taken possession of his soul and of his house. His eyes and ears, habituated to tumult, were as it were stupefied with calm and repose. He still viewed with envy those who were ruining themselves, like himself; and Paris, where he found himself condemned to privations in the midst of enjoyments, became odious to him.

Acelia, who perceived it, and who pursued her plan with that constancy which is found only in women, proposed to him to go and see the lands which they had bought. But, before setting out, she charged her lawyer to hire her, instead of the hotel which they occupied, a house genteelly plain, to live in at their return.

Of three estates which Melidor had, the two most honourable produced scarce a third of the interest of the purchase money. It was resolved, therefore, that he should sell them. The other having been long neglected, required only improvement to become an excellent estate. 'This is the estate we must keep,' said Acelia: 'let us employ all our care in raising its value. It is a wholesome air, an agreeable prospect, and a fertile soil; we will pass the pleasant part of the year there; and, believe me, we will love one another there. Your wife will not have the airs, the caprices, the art of coquettes, but a sincere and tender friendship; which will constitute, if you partake it, your happiness, mine, that of our children, and the joy of our family. I know not how it is, but since I breathe the air of the country, my pleasures are more simple and natural; happiness seems more within my reach, more accessible to my desires; I see it pure, and without clouds, in the innocence of rural manners; and I have, for the first time, the idea of the serenity of an innocent life, which flows in peace to the very end.' Melidor heard his wife with complaisance, and consolation diffused itself over his soul like a delicious balm.

He consented, not without repugnance, to the sale of those of his lands whose rights had flattered him the most; and the good lawyer managed so well, that, in the space of six months, Melidor found himself indebted to nobody in the world.

Nothing now remained but to strengthen him against the bent of habit; and Acelia, who knew his foible, did not despair of extinguishing in him the relish of luxury, by a taste more discreet and satisfactory. The estate which they had reserved presented a vast field for useful labours; and Acelia bethought her of forming a little council of husbandmen for the direction of them. This council was composed of seven honest, sensible villagers, to whom she gave a dinner every Sunday. This dinner was called The Banquet of the Seven Wise Men. The council was held at table, and Melidor, Acelia, and the little abbé, assisted at the deliberations. The quality of soils, and the culture which suited them; the choice of the plants and seeds, the establishment of new farms, and the division of the ground into woods, pasturages, and corn-fields; the distribution of the flocks destined for fattening and labour, the direction and employment of the waters, plantations, and enclosures, and even the smallest particulars of rural economy, were treated in the council. Our sages, glass in hand, animated and enlightened each other; to hear them, one might have imagined that one saw treasures buried in the earth which waited only for hands to come and dig them out.

Melidor was flattered with this hope, and above all with the kind of domination which he should exercise in the conduct of these labours; but he did not think that he had means sufficient to carry them into execution. 'Let us begin,' said Acelia, 'and the ground will assist us.' They did but little the first year, but sufficient to give Melidor a foretaste of the pleasure of creating.

The council, at Acelia's departure, received from

her a small recompense, and the good grace with which she gave it, enhanced the value.

Melidor, on his return to town, was enchanted with his new house. It was commodious and pleasing, furnished without pomp, but with taste. 'This, my dear, is what suits us,' said his wife. 'There is enough of it to be happy in it, if we are wise.' She had the pleasure of seeing him grow dull at Paris, where he found himself confounded in the crowd, and sigh after the country, where the desire of reigning recalled him.

They went down there before the return of spring, and the sages being assembled, they regulated the labours of the year.

From the moment that Melidor saw the ground enlivened by his influence, and a multitude of people employed in fertilising it for him, he felt himself lifted above himself. A new farm, which he had established, was adjudged by the council, and Melidor had the sensible joy of seeing the first crop.

Their joy was renewed every day, on seeing those very fields, which two years before languished uncultivated, and unpeopled, covered with labourers and flocks, with woods, harvests, and herbages; and Melidor saw, with regret, the arrival of the season which recalled him to Paris.

Acelia could not resist the inclination of visiting the minister, who, in her misfortune, had stretched out his hand to her. She gave him so touching a picture of the happiness which they enjoyed, that he was moved to the bottom of his soul. 'You are,' said he to her, 'the model of women: may such an example make, on all hearts, the impression which it makes on mine! Go on, madam, and depend on me. It is too much honour to be able to contribute to the happiness which you occasion.'

That fortunate country, to which our couple were recalled by the fine weather, became a smiling

picture of economy and abundance. But a picture, still more touching, was that of the education which they gave to their children.

They talked in the neighbourhood of a couple like themselves, withdrawn from the world, and who, in a pleasing solitude, made it their delight to cultivate the tender fruits of their love. 'Let us go and see them,' said Acelia; 'let us go and take lessons from them.' On arriving, they saw the image of happiness and of virtue, M. and Madam de Lisbé, in the midst of their young family, solely occupied with the care of forming the understanding and the heart.

Acelia was touched at the grace, the decency, and, above all, with the air of gaiety which she remarked in these children. They had neither the rustic bashfulness, nor the indiscreet familiarity of childhood. In their addresses, their conversation, their language, nothing appeared but a natural excellence; so very easy had habit rendered all the movements which it had directed.

'This is not a visit of ceremony,' said Acelia to Madam de Lisbé; 'we come to take instructions from you in the art of bringing up our children, and to entreat you to teach us the principles and the method which you have followed with so much success.'

'Alas, madam, nothing is more plain,' replied Madam de Lisbé. 'Our principles consist in treating children as children, to make useful things a play to them; to make plain what we teach them, and to teach them only what they are able to conceive. Our method is equally simple: it consists in leading them to instruction by curiosity; in concealing from them, under that allurement, the idea of labour and constraint, and in directing their very curiosity, by certain thoughts thrown in their way, and which we give them an inclination of seizing. The most difficult is that of exciting emulation without jealousy, and in that, perhaps, we

have less merit than good fortune.'—'You have given them, without doubt, excellent masters?'—'No, madam, we learnt whatever we wished to teach them. See how the dove digests the nourishment of her young ones. Let us imitate her, and from thence result two advantages, and two pleasures: that of instructing ourselves, and that of instructing our children.'

'This little labour is so much the more amusing,' said M. de Lisbé, 'as we have reserved all the abstracted studies for the age of reason, and as our lessons are, at present, confined to what falls beneath the senses. Childhood is the age in which the imagination is most lively, and the memory most docile; it is to objects of these two organs that we apply the minds of our children. The surface of the ground is an image; the history of men, and that of nature, are a succession of pictures: the natural philosophy of tongues is only sounds; the part of the mathematics to be perceived by the senses is reduced to lines; all the arts may be described. Religion itself, and moral philosophy, are better learnt by our feelings than they are conceived in idea; in a word, all our simple and primitive perceptions come to us by the senses. Now, the senses of children have more fineness, delicacy, and vivacity, than those of mature age. It is taking nature then in her strength, to take her in childhood, to perceive and seize every thing which requires not the combinations of the understanding; besides that the soul, free from all other care, is entirely at leisure to attend to this: that it is greedy of knowledge, exempt from prejudice, and that all the cells of the understanding and the memory being empty, we range ideas there at pleasure, especially if, in the art of introducing them, we follow their natural order, if we are not in too much haste to accumulate them, and if we give them leisure to settle themselves each in their place.'

'I see,' said Acelia, 'but without terrifying myself at it, that all this demands a continued attention.'—'That attention,' replied Madam de Lisbé, 'has nothing constraining nor painful. We live with our children, we have them under our eyes, we converse with them, we accustom them to examine and to reflect, we assist them, without impatience, in developing their ideas, we never discourage them by a tone of ill humour or contempt; severity, which is only of service to remedying the fault of negligence, has scarce ever place in an unremitted education; and as we do not suffer nature to take any vicious bent, we are not obliged to put it under constraint.'

'Shall I not be indiscreet,' said Acelia to her, 'in testifying to you the desire I have of being present at one of your lessons?' Madam de Lisbé called her children, who were employed together in a corner of the hall. They flew to the arms of their mother with a natural joy, at which Acelia was touched. 'Children,' said the mother, 'the lady would willingly hear you: we are going to question each other.'

Acelia admired the order and clearness of the knowledge which they had acquired; but she was still more enchanted at the grace and modesty with which they replied in their turns, at the good understanding which reigned among them, and at the lively interest which they took at the success of each other.

Acelia's object was to interest Melidor in this sight, and he was moved even to tears. 'How happy are you,' said he continually to Madam de Lisbé, 'how happy are you in having such children! It is the sweetest of all enjoyments.'

Acelia, on quitting her neighbours, requested their friendship: she embraced a thousand times their children, and prayed them to give her leave to come sometimes to instruct herself by their studies.

'What can be more astonishing, and more plain!' said she to Melidor, on going away. 'Can it be, that a pleasure so pure is so little known: and that what is most natural should be what is most uncommon? People have children, and grow tired of them! and seek abroad for amusements, when they have such touching pleasures at home!' —'True,' said Melidor; 'all children are not so well endowed.'—'And who has told us,' replied Acelia, 'that Heaven has not granted us the same favour? Ah, my dear, it is for the sake of sparing ourselves, that we so often reproach nature. We generally blame her, in order to justify ourselves. Before we have a right to think her incorrigible, we should have done every thing to correct her. We are neither weak nor wicked; our children ought not to be so. Let us live with them, and for them; and I promise you that they will resemble us.'

'You are going to have two assistants,' said she in the evening to the abbé. 'We have just had a foretaste of the pleasure of educating our children:' and she related what they had seen and heard. 'We would follow the same plan,' added she. 'You, my good abbé, you shall teach them the languages; Melidor is going to apply himself to the study of the arts, and of nature, in order to be able to give lessons on them. I reserve to myself what is easiest and most simple, the manners, the objects of sentiment; and I hope, in a year, to be able to keep pace with you. You must show us the sources, and direct our studies, step by step, on the shortest plan.'

The abbé applauded this emulation, and each of them set about filling his task with an ardour which, far from weakening itself, only redoubled.

Melidor found no farther vacancy in the leisure of the country. It seemed to him, as if Time hastened his course. The days were not long enough to attend to the cares of agriculture, and the studies

of the closet. One might have said, that these employments stole from one another. Acelia was divided, in like manner, between the cares of her household and the instruction of her children. Nature seconded her views. Her children, full of application, and docile, whether by the example of their parents, or through a mutual emulation, made their little exercises their diversion.

But this success, satisfying as it was to the heart of a good mother, was not her most serious object. She had ensured to Melidor the only inexhaustible resource against the dulness of solitude, and the attraction of dissipation. 'I am easy,' said she, 'at last,' when she saw in him a determined liking for study. 'It is a pleasure which costs little, which we find every where, which never tires, and with which we are sure of not being obliged to fly ourselves.'

Melidor, restored to himself, far from being ashamed to confess that he owed his reformation to his wife, took a pride in relating all she had done to reclaim him from his errors: he ceased not to commend the courage, the understanding, the sweetness, the firmness she had mingled in it; and all the world, on hearing him, said, '*This is a Wife of Ten Thousand!*'

FRIENDSHIP PUT TO THE TEST.

In one of those schools of morality to which the English youth go to study the duties of a man and a citizen, to enlighten the understanding and elevate the soul, Nelson and Blandford were distinguished by a friendship worthy of the first ages. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of sentiments and principles, time only served to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became. But this friendship was put to a test, which it had some difficulty to support.

Their studies being finished, each of them took to that way of life, to which nature invited him. Blandford, active, robust, and courageous, determined for the profession of arms, and for the sea-service. Voyages were his school. Inured to fatigues, instructed by dangers, he arrived, from rank to rank, to the command of a vessel.

Nelson, endowed with a manly eloquence, and of a genius wise and profound, was of the number of those deputies, of whom the national senate is composed; and in a short time he rendered himself famous there.

Thus each of them served his country, happy in the good which he did it: while Blandford sustained the shock of war, and of the elements, Nelson stood proof against favour and ambition. Examples of an heroic zeal, one would have thought that, jealous of each other, they contended for virtue and glory, or rather that, at two extremities of the world, the same spirit animated them both.

'Courage,' said Nelson, in his letters to Blandford, 'does honour to friendship, by preserving its country: live for the one, if it be possible, and die

for the other, if there be occasion: a death, worthy of its tears, is more valuable than the longest life.'—'Courage,' said Blandford, in his letters to Nelson, 'defends the rights of the people and of liberty: a smile from one's country is of more value than the favour of kings.'

Blandford enriched himself by doing his duty: he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian seas. But the most valuable part of his treasure was a young Indian, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom heaven had given this only daughter in reward for his virtues, had consigned her up, in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Englishman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year; her father made her his delight, and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the English. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) presents himself on the threshold of his habitation. 'Hold!' said he to the soldiers, who were come quite up to his humble sanctuary, 'hold! Whoever you be, the God of nature, the beneficent God, is yours and mine: respect in me his minister.'

These words, the sound of his voice, his venerable air, impress respect; but the fatal stroke is given, and the Bramin falls mortally wounded into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that instant Blandford arrives. He comes to repress the fury of the soldiery. He cries out; he makes a passage through them; he sees the Bramin leaning on a young girl scarce able to support him, and who, tottering herself, bathes the old man with her tears. At this sight, nature, beauty, love, exercise all their influence on Blandford's soul. He easily discovers in Solinzeb the father of her who embraces him with such affectionate sorrow.

'Barbarians,' said he to the soldiers, 'begone!

Is it feebleness and innocence, old age and childhood, that you ought to attack?—Mortal, sacred to me,' said he to the Bramin, 'live, live; suffer me to repair the crime of those savages.' At these words he takes him into his arms, makes him lie down, examines the wound, and procures him all the assistance of art. Coraly, witness to the piety, the sensibility of this stranger, thought she saw a God descended from heaven to succour and comfort her father.

Blandford, who did not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to soften the sorrow of his daughter; but she seemed to have a presage of her misfortune, and passed the nights and days in tears.

The Bramin perceiving his end to approach, 'I would fain,' said he to Blandford, 'go and die on the border of the Ganges, and purify myself in its waves.'—'Father,' replied the young Englishman to him, 'it would be easy to give you that consolation if all hope was lost. But wherefore add to the peril in which you are, that of so painful a removal? It is so far from hence to the Ganges! And then (be not offended at my sincerity) it is the purity of the heart which the God of nature requires; and if you have observed the law which he has engraven on our souls, if you have done mankind all the good that you have been able, if you have avoided doing them ill, the God who loves them will love you.'

'Thou art full of consolation,' said the Bramin. 'But thou, who reducest the duties of mankind to a plain piety, and purity of manners, how can it be that thou art at the head of those robbers who ravage India, and who bathe themselves in blood?'

'You have seen,' said Blandford, 'whether I authorise those ravages. Commerce draws us to India; and if men acted uprightly, that mutual exchange of conveniences would be just and peaceable. The violence of your masters obliged us to take arms; and the transition is so quick from de-

fence to attack, that at the first success, at the smallest advantage, the oppressed becomes the oppressor. War is a violent state, which it is not easy to soften: Alas! when man becomes unnatural, how can he be just? It is my duty here to protect the commerce of the English, to make my country honoured and respected. In the discharge of this duty, I spare, as far as possible, the effusion of blood and tears which war occasions; happy if the death of a good man, the death of Coraly's father, be one of those crimes and misfortunes which I am destined to save the world!' Thus spoke the virtuous Blandford, and embraced the old man.

'Thou wouldest persuade me,' said Solinzeb, 'that virtue is every where the same. But thou believest not in the God Vistnou and his nine metamorphoses: how can a good man refuse his assent to them?'—'Father,' replied the Englishman, 'there are millions of people upon the earth who have never heard either of Vistnou or his adventures; for whom however the sun rises every day, who breathe a pure air, who drink wholesome waters, and to whom earth lavishes the fruits of the seasons. Would you believe it? There are among these people, as well as among the children of Brachma, virtuous hearts, and good men. Equity, candour, uprightness, beneficence, and piety are in veneration among them, and even among the wicked. O my father! the dreams of the imagination differ according to climates, but the mind is every where the same, and the light which is its source is as widely diffused as that of the sun.'

'This stranger enlightens and astonishes me,' said Solinzeb within himself: 'all that my heart, my reason, the inward voice of nature tell me to believe, he believes also; and of my worship he denies only that part which I have so much trouble myself not to deem absurd.'—'Thou thinkest then,' said he to Blandford, 'that a good man may die in

peace?'—'Certainly.'—'I think so too, and I wait death as a gentle sleep. But when I am gone, what will become of my daughter? I see nothing in my country but slavery and desolation. My daughter had only me in the world, and in a few moments I shall be no more.'—'Ah!' said the young Englishman, 'if to her misfortune death deprives her of a father, deign to confide her to my cares. I call heaven to witness that her chastity, innocence, and liberty, shall be a deposit guarded by honour, and for ever inviolable.'—'And in what principles shall she be brought up?'—'In yours, if you please; in mine, if you will allow me; but at all events in that modesty and virtue which are every where the glory of a woman.'—'Young man,' replied the Bramin, with an august and threatening air, 'God has just heard thy words; and the old man with whom thou now speakest will perhaps in an hour be with him.'—'You have no need,' said Blandford to him, 'to make me perceive the sacredness of my promises. I am but a feeble mortal; but nothing under heaven is more immoveable than the honesty of my heart.' He spoke these words with such firmness, that the Bramin was penetrated with them. 'Come, Coraly,' said he to his daughter, 'come, embrace thy dying father: let him be, after me, thy guide and thy support. There, my daughter,' added he, 'is the book of the law of thy forefathers, the *Veidam:* after having well meditated on it, suffer thyself to be instructed in the creed of this virtuous stranger, and choose that of the two forms of worship which shall seem to thee the most proper to make people virtuous.'

The night following, the Bramin expired. His daughter, who filled the air with her cries, was not able to detach herself from that livid and cold corpse which she watered with her tears. At last sorrow exhausted her strength, and the attendants availed themselves of her fainting to carry her away from the melancholy place.

Blandford, whom his duty recalled from Asia to Europe, carried thither with him his pupil; and though she was beautiful and easy to seduce, though he was young and strongly taken, he respected her innocence. During the voyage, he employed himself in teaching her a little English, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and in disengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelson was gone to meet his friend. They saw each other again with the most sensible joy. But the first sight of Coraly struck and afflicted Nelson. 'What do you do with this girl?' said he to Blandford, in a severe tone. 'Is she a captive, a slave? Have you carried her off from her parents? Have you made nature mourn?' Blandford related what had passed; he gave him so touching a portrait of the innocence, candour, and sensibility of the young Indian, that Nelson himself was moved at it. 'This is my design,' continued Blandford: 'at my mother's, and under her eyes, she shall be instructed in our manners: I will form that simple and docile heart; and if she can be happy with me, I will marry her.'—'I am easy, and acknowledge my friend.'

The surprises and different emotions of a young stranger, to whom every thing is new, have been often described; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in seizing, and comprehending every thing, even outstripped the pains which they took to instruct her. Genius, talents, and the graces, were in her innate gifts: they had only the trouble of developing them by a slight culture. She was near sixteen, and Blandford was going to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if she had been her own; and the pains which she took to console Blandford touched him sensibly. But during the mourning, which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to see Nelson,

and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian—Nelson would have made him blush at that; but the grief of leaving her to herself, in the midst of a world which was unknown to her. 'If my mother,' said he, 'were still living, she would be her guide; but the ill-fortune which pursues this poor girl has taken away from her her only support.'—'Have you then forgot,' said Nelson, 'that I have a sister, and that my house is your own?'—'Ah, Nelson!' replied Blandford, fixing his eyes on his, 'if you knew what that charge is which you would have me confide to you!' At these words Nelson smiled with disdain. 'This uneasiness,' said he, 'is a fine compliment to us both. You dare not trust me with a woman!' Blandford, in confusion, blushed. 'Pardon my weakness,' said he; 'it made me see danger where thy virtue finds none. I judged of your heart by my own: it is me whom my fear humbles. Let us say no more of it: I shall set out in peace, leaving the pledge of my love under the guard of friendship. But, my dear Nelson, if I die, let me request you to take my place.'—'Yes, that of father, I promise you; ask no more.'—'Enough; nothing farther detains me.'

The adieus of Coraly and Blandford were mingled with tears; but Coraly's tears were not those of love. A lively gratitude, a respectful friendship, were the tenderest sentiments which Blandford had inspired her with. Her own sensibility was not known to her: the dangerous advantage of unfolding it was reserved for Nelson.

Blandford was handsomer than his friend; but his figure, like his temper, had a manly and austere fierceness in it. The sentiments which he had conceived for his pupil seemed to have given him rather the disposition of a father than of a lover: his attentions were without complaisance, his goodness without charms, his concern tender, but solemn; and his desire was that of rendering

her happy with him rather than of being happy with her.

'Nelson, who was of a more engaging temper, had also more sweetness in his features and his language. His eyes especially, his eyes expressed the eloquence of the soul. His look, the most touching in the world, seemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a secret correspondence with them. His voice thundered when there was a necessity to defend the interests of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty; but in familiar conversation it was full of sensibility and charms. What rendered him still more engaging, was an air of modesty diffused over his whole person. This man, who at the head of his nation would have made a tyrant tremble, was in company of a timid bashfulness: one single word of commendation made him blush.

Lady Juliet Albury, his sister, was a widow of great prudence, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of unhappy prudence which always anticipates misfortune, and accelerates instead of preventing it. It was she who was charged with consoling the young Indian. 'I have lost my second father,' said that amiable girl to her. 'I have now only you and Nelson in the world. I will love you, I will obey you. My life and heart are yours.' While she was yet embracing Juliet, Nelson arrives, and Coraly rises with a smiling and heavenly countenance, but still bedewed with tears.

'Well,' said Nelson to his sister, 'have you consoled her a little?'—'Yes, I am consoled, I have no farther complaint,' cried the young Indian, at the same time wiping her fine black eyes. Then making Nelson seat himself by the side of Juliet, and falling on her knees before them, she took them by their hands, put them one in the other, and pressing them tenderly in her own, 'There is my mother,' said she to Nelson, with a look which would have softened marble; 'and you, Nelson,

what will you be to me?'—'I, madam? Your good friend.'—'*My good friend!* that is charming! then I shall be your good friend too? Give me only that name.'—'Yes, my good friend, my dear Coraly, your frankness delights me.'—'My God,' said he to his sister, 'what a beautiful girl! She will be the delight of your life.'—'Yes, if she is not the misery of yours,' replied the provident sister. Nelson smiled with disdain. 'No,' said he, 'love never disputes in my soul the rights of sacred friendship. Be easy, sister, and employ yourself in peace, in the care of cultivating this beautiful innocent. Blandford will be enchanted with her, if, at his return, she is mistress of our language. For we may perceive in her ideas, shadows of sentiment, which she is unhappy at not being able to express. Her eyes, her gestures, her features, every thing about her proclaims ingenious thoughts, which only want words to call them forth. This, sister, will be an amusement to you, and you will see her mind open like a flower.'—'Yes, my brother, as a flower with a multitude of thorns.'

Lady Albury constantly gave English lessons to her pupil; and the latter rendered them every day more interesting, by intermingling with them strokes of sentiment of a vivacity and delicacy which belongs only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make discovery of a word, which expressed any gentle affection of the soul. She made the most natural, the most touching applications of them: Nelson arrived; she flew to him, and repeated her lesson to him with a joy, and simplicity, which yet he found only amusing. Juliet alone saw the danger, and wanted to prevent it.

She began by making Coraly understand that it was not polite to *thee* and *thou* it, and that she should say *you:* at least unless it were a brother and a sister. Coraly made her explain what politeness was, and asked what it was good for, if

brother and sister had no need of it? They told her, that in the world it supplied the place of good humour. She concluded that it was useless to those who wished well to each other. They added, that it displayed a desire of obliging and of pleasing. She replied, that this desire displayed itself without politeness: then giving for an example Juliet's little dog, which never quitted her, and caressed her perpetually, she asked if he was polite. Juliet entrenched herself behind the punctilios of decorum, which approved not, said she, the too free and joyous air of Coraly towards Nelson: and the latter, who had the idea of jealousy, because nature gives us the sensation of it, imagined within herself that the sister was jealous of the kindnesses which her brother did her. 'No,' said she to her, 'I will afflict you no longer. I love you, I submit, and I will say *you* to Nelson.'

He was surprised at this change in Coraly's language, and complained of it to Juliet. 'The *you*,' said he, 'displeases me in her mouth: it agrees not with her simplicity.'—'It displeases me too,' replied the Indian: 'it has something rebuffing and severe: whereas the *thou* is so soft! so intimate! so attracting!'—'Do you hear, sister? She begins to understand the language.'—'Ha! it is not that which makes me uneasy: with a soul like hers, we express ourselves but too well.'—'Explain to me,' said Coraly to Nelson, 'whence can arise the ridiculous custom of saying *you*, in speaking to a single person.'—'It arises, child, from the pride and weakness of man: he perceives that he is insignificant; being but one, he endeavours to double himself, to multiply himself in idea.'—'Yes, I comprehend that folly; but thou, Nelson, thou art not vain enough...'—'Again!' interrupted Juliet with a severe tone. 'Hey! what, sister, are you going to chide her?' 'Come, Coraly, come to me.'—'I forbid her.'—'How cruel you are! Is she in danger with me? Do you suspect me of lay-

ing snares for her? Ah! leave her that pure nature; leave her the amiable candour of her country and age. Wherefore tarnish in her that flower of innocence, more precious than virtue itself, and which our factitious manners have so much difficulty to supply? It seems to me that nature is afflicted when the idea of evil penetrates into the soul. Alas! it is a venomous plant which grows wild but too readily, without our giving ourselves the trouble of sowing it.'—'What you say is very fine, to be sure; but since evil exists, we must avoid it; and in order to avoid it, we must know it.'—'Ah! my poor little Coraly,' said Nelson, 'into what a world art thou transplanted! What manners are those, in which we are obliged to lose one half of our innocence in order to save the other!'

In proportion as the moral ideas increased in the young Indian's mind, she lost her gaiety and natural ingenuousness. Every new institution seemed to her a new fetter. 'Another duty,!' said she. 'Another prohibition! My soul is enveloped as with a net; they are going soon to render it immoveable.' That they made a crime of what was hurtful, Coraly comprehended without difficulty; but she could not imagine any harm in what did no harm to any body. 'What greater happiness in living together,' said she, 'than to see one another with pleasure? and why conceal from ourselves so sweet an impression? Is not pleasure a blessing? Why then hide it from the person who occasions it? They pretend to feel it with those whom they do not love, and to feel none with those whom they do! Some enemy of truth devised these manners.'

Reflections of this sort plunged her into melancholy; and when Juliet reproached her with it, 'You know the cause of it,' said she; 'every thing that is contrary to nature must make her sorrowful, and in your manners every thing is contrary to

nature.' Coraly, in her little impatiences, had something so soft and touching, that Lady Albury accused herself of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of consoling her, and of restoring to her her good humour, was by employing her in little services, and by commanding her as her child. The pleasure of thinking that she was useful flattered her sensibly: she foresaw the instant, in order to seize it: but the same attentions that she paid to Juliet she wanted to pay to Nelson, and they distressed her by moderating her zeal. 'The good offices of servitude,' said she, 'are low and vile, because they are not voluntary; but from the moment that they are free, there is no longer shame, and friendship ennobles them. Fear not, my good friend, that I shall suffer myself to be abased. Though very young, before I quitted India I knew the dignity of the tribe in which I was born; and when your fine ladies and young lords come to examine me with such familiar curiosity, their disdain only elevates my soul, and I perceive that I am well worth them all. But with you and Nelson, who love me as your daughter, what can there be humiliating to me?'

Nelson himself seemed sometimes confused at the trouble she took. 'You are very vain then,' said she to him, 'since you blush at having need of me! I am not so proud as you: serve me; I shall be flattered with it.'

All these strokes of an ingenuous and sensible soul made Lady Albury uneasy. 'I tremble,' said she to Nelson, when they were alone, 'I tremble lest she love you, and lest that love occasion her unhappiness.' He took this hint for an injury to innocence. 'See there now,' said he, 'how the abuse of words alters and displaces ideas. Coraly loves me, I know it; but she loves me as you do. Is there any thing more natural than to attach one's self to the person who does us good? Is it a fault in this girl, if the tender and lively expression of a

sentiment so just, and so laudable, is profaned in our manners? Whatever criminality we affix to it, has it ever come into her thought?'—'No, brother, you do not understand me. Nothing more innocent than her love for you; but...'—'But, sister, why suppose, why want it to be love? It is true and pure friendship for me, which she has for you likewise.'—'You persuade yourself, Nelson, that it is the same sentiment; will you make trial of it? Let us have the appearance of separating, and of reducing her to the choice of quitting the one or the other.'—'See there now: snares! wiles! Why impose them on her? Why teach her to dissemble? Alas! does her soul practise disguise?'—'Yes; I begin to constrain her: she has grown afraid of me ever since she has loved you.'—'And why have you inspired her with that fear? You would have us be ingenuous, and you make it dangerous to be so: you recommend truth, and, if it escape, you make it a reproach. Ah! Nature is not to blame; she would be frank if she had liberty: it is the art which is employed to constrain her that gives her a bias to falsity.'—'These are very grave reflections for what is in fact a mere jest! For, after all, what does the whole amount to? To make Coraly uneasy for a moment, in order to see to which side her heart will incline: that is all.'—'That is all: but that is a falsity; and, which is worse, an afflicting one.'—'Let us think no more of it: it answers no end to examine what we would not see.'—'I, sister! I only want information, to know how to behave. The manner alone has displeased me; but no matter: what do you require of me?'—'Silence, and a serious air. Coraly comes; now you shall hear.'

'What is the matter now?' said Coraly, on coming up to them. 'Nelson in one corner! Juliet in the other! Are you displeased?'—'We have just taken,' said Juliet to her, 'a resolution which afflicts us; but there was a necessity of coming to

it. We are no longer to live together; each of us is to have a house of their own, and we are agreed to leave you the choice.'

At these words, Coraly viewed Juliet with eyes immoveable, with sorrow and astonishment. 'It is I,' said she, 'that am the cause of your wanting to quit Nelson. You are displeased that he loves me; you are jealous of the pity which a young orphan inspires him with. Alas! what will you not envy, if you envy pity; if you envy her who loves you, and who would give her life for you, the only valuable thing which is left her? You are unjust, my lady; yes, you are unjust. Your brother, in loving me, loves not you less; and if it were possible, he would love you more, for my sentiments would pass into his soul, and I have nothing to inspire into him towards you but complaisance and love.'

Juliet would fain have persuaded her that she and Nelson parted good friends. 'It is impossible,' said she. 'You made it your delight to live together. And since when is it become necessary that you should have two houses? People who love one another are never put to straits; distance pleases only those who hate each other.' 'You, O Heaven! you to hate!' resumed she. 'And who will love, if two hearts, so good, so virtuous, do not? It is I, wretch as I am, that have brought trouble into the house of peace. I will banish myself from it: yes, I beseech you, send me back into my own country. I shall there find souls sensible to my misfortune and to my tears, who will not make it a crime in me to inspire a little pity.'

'You forget,' said Juliet to her, 'that you are our charge.'—'I am free,' replied the young Indian fiercely: 'I may dispose of myself. What should I do here? With whom should I live? With what eyes would one of you regard me, after having deprived you of the other? Should I supply the place of a sister to Nelson? Should I console you for the

loss of a brother? To occasion the unhappiness of what alone I love? No, you shall not part: my arms shall be a chain to you.' Then running towards Nelson, and seizing him by the hand, 'Come,' said she to him, 'swear to your sister that you love nothing in the world so well as her.' Nelson, touched to the bottom of his soul, suffered himself to be led to his sister's feet; and Coraly throwing herself on Juliet's neck, 'You,' continued she, 'if you are my mother, pardon him for having loved your child: his heart was enough for us both, and if you are any loser there, mine shall indemnify you for it.'—'Ah! dangerous girl,' said Juliet, 'what sorrows will you soon occasion us!'—'Ah, sister,' cried Nelson, who felt himself pressed by Coraly against Juliet's bosom, 'have you the heart to afflict this poor girl!'

Coraly, enchanted at her triumph, kissed Juliet tenderly, at the very instant when Nelson put his face to his sister's. He felt his cheek touch the glowing cheek of Coraly, still wet with tears. He was surprised at the confusion and ecstasy which this accident occasioned him. 'Happily that,' said he, 'is only a simple emotion of the senses: it goes not to the soul. I am myself, and I am sure of myself.' He dissembled, however, from his sister what he would fain have concealed from himself. He tenderly consoled Coraly, in confessing to her that all they had just said to her, to make her uneasy, was nothing more than a jest. 'But what is no jest,' added he, 'is the counsel which I give you of distrusting, my dear Coraly, your own heart, which is too innocent, and too sensible. Nothing more charming than this affecting and tender disposition; but the best things very often become dangerous by their excess.'

'Will you not quiet my uneasiness?' said Coraly to Juliet, as soon as Nelson was retired. 'Though you tell me so, it is not natural to make sport of my sorrow. There is something serious

in this pastime. I see you deeply moved; Nelson himself was seized with I know not what terror; I felt his hand tremble in mine; my eyes met his, and I saw there something so tender, and so sorrowful at the same time. He dreads my sensibility. He seems to be afraid that I should deliver myself up to it. My good friend, would it be any harm to love?'—'Yes, child; since we must tell you so, it is a misfortune both for you and for him. A woman, you may have seen it in the Indies as well as among us, a woman is destined for the society of one man alone; and by that union solemnised and sacred, the pleasure of loving becomes a duty to her.'—'I know it,' said Coraly, ingenuously: 'that is what they call marriage.'—'Yes, Coraly; and that friendship is laudable between two married persons, but till then it is forbidden.'—'That is not reasonable,' said the young Indian; 'for before uniting one to the other, we must know whether we love each other; and it is but in proportion to our love beforehand that we are sure of loving afterwards. For example, if Nelson loved me as I love him, it would be clear that each of us had met their counterpart.'—'And do you not see in how many respects, and by how many compacts, we are slaves, and that you are not destined for Nelson?'—'I understand you,' said Coraly, looking down; 'I am poor, and Nelson is rich; but my ill-fortune at least does not forbid me to honour and cherish beneficent virtue. If a tree had sentiment, it would please itself in seeing the person who cultivates it repose himself under its shade, breathe the perfume of its flowers, and taste the sweetness of its fruits: I am that tree, cultivated by you two, and nature has given me a soul.'

Juliet smiled at the comparison; but she soon gave her to understand that nothing would be less decent than what to her seemed so just. Coraly heard her, and blushed; from that time, to her gaiety, to her natural ingenuousness, succeeded an

air the most reserved, and a conversation the most timid. What hurt her most in our manners, though she might have seen examples of it in India, was the excessive inequality of riches: but she had not yet been humiliated by it: she was so now for the first time.

'Madam,' said she, the next day, to Juliet, 'my life is spent in instructing myself in things which are rather superfluous: an industry which furnishes bread would be much more useful to me. It is a resource which I beseech you to be pleased to procure me.'—'You will never be reduced to that,' said Lady Albury; 'and, not to mention us, it is not for nothing that Blandford has assumed towards you the quality of father.'—'Favours,' replied Coraly, 'bind us much oftener than we would choose. It is not disgraceful to receive them, but I clearly perceive that it is still more reputable to do without them.' It was in vain that Juliet complained of this excess of delicacy: Coraly would not hear of amusements, or of useless studies. Amidst the labours which suit feeble hands, she chose those which required the most address and understanding, and, on applying herself to them, her only anxiety was to know whether they afforded a subsistence. 'You will leave me then?' said Juliet. 'I would put myself,' replied Coraly, 'above all wants, except that of loving you. I would have it in my power to rid you of me, if I am any obstacle to your happiness; but if I can contribute to it, entertain no fear of my removing myself. I am useless, and yet I am dear to you; that disinterestedness is an example which I think myself worthy of imitating.'

Nelson knew not what to think of Coraly's application to a labour merely mechanical, and of the disgust which had seized her for matters of pure entertainment. He saw, with the same surprise, the modest simplicity which she had assumed in her dress; he asked her the reason. 'I am trying

what it is to be poor,' replied she, with a smile; and casting her eyes downwards, bedewed them with her tears. These words and involuntary tears touched him to the soul. 'O Heaven!' said he, 'can my sister have made her afraid of seeing herself poor and desolate?' As soon as he was alone with Juliet, he pressed her to clear up the matter to him.

'Alas!' said he, after having heard her, 'what cruel pains you take to poison her life and mine! Though you were less certain of her innocence, are you not persuaded of my honour?'—'Ah, Nelson! it is not the crime, it is the misfortune which terrifies me. You see with what dangerous security she delivers herself up to the pleasure of seeing you; how she attaches herself insensibly to you; how nature leads her, without her knowledge, into the snare. Ah, brother! at our age and hers, the name of friendship is but a veil. And why can I not leave you both under the illusion? No, Nelson, your duty is dearer to me than your ease. Coraly is destined for your friend; he himself has confided her to you, and, without intending it, you take her from him.'—'I, sister! What is it you dare to warn me of?'—'Of what you ought to shun. I would have her, at the same time that she loves you, consent to give herself to Blandford: I would have him flatter himself with being loved by her, and be happy with her; but will she be happy with him? Were you sensible only of pity, of which she is so worthy, what sorrow would you not feel at having troubled, perhaps for ever, the repose of this unfortunate young creature! But it would be a prodigy to see her consume with love, and you do nothing more than pity her. You will love her. Will, do I say? Ah, Nelson, Heaven grant that you do not already!'—'Yes, sister, it is time to take whatever resolution you please. I only beg of you to spare the sensibility of that innocent

soul, and not to afflict her too much.'—'Your absence will afflict her, without doubt; yet that alone can cure her. This is the time of the year for the country; I was to follow you there, and to bring Coraly; do you go alone: we will remain at London. Write, however, to Blandford, that we have occasion for his return.'

From the moment the Indian saw that Nelson left her at London with Juliet, she thought herself cast into a desert, and abandoned by all nature. But as she had learned to be ashamed, and of course to dissemble, she pretended, as an excuse for her sorrow, the blame she took to herself of having separated them from each other. 'You was to have followed him,' said she to Lady Albury; 'it is I that keep you here. Ah, wretch that I am! leave me alone; abandon me.' And in saying these words, she wept bitterly. The more Juliet tried to divert her, the more she increased her sorrows. All the objects which surrounded her served only just to touch her senses; one idea alone possessed her soul. There was a necessity for a kind of violence to draw her from it, but the instant they left her to herself, it seemed as if one saw her thought fly back again to the object which she had been made to quit. If the name of Nelson was pronounced before her, a deep blush overspread her visage, her bosom heaved, her lips trembled, her whole body was seized with a sensible shivering. Juliet surprised her in a walk, tracing out on the sand, from place to place, the letters of that dear name. Nelson's picture decorated Juliet's apartment: Coraly's eyes never failed to fix themselves upon it as soon as they were free: it was in vain she wanted to turn them aside; they soon returned there again, as it were of themselves, and by one of those emotions in which the soul is accomplice, and not confidante. The gloominess into which she was plunged dispersed at this sight,

her work fell out of her hands, and the utmost tenderness of sorrow and love animated her beauty.

Lady Albury thought it her duty to remove this feeble image. This was to Coraly the most distressful misfortune. Her despair now broke all bounds. 'Cruel friend,' said she to Juliet, 'you delight in afflicting me. You would have all my life be only sorrow and bitterness. If any thing softens my troubles, you cruelly take it from me. Not content to banish from me the man I love, his very shadow has too many charms for me; you envy me the pleasure, the feeble pleasure of seeing it.'—'Ah, unhappy girl! what would you?'—'Love, adore him, live for him, while he shall live for another. I hope nothing, I ask nothing; my hands are sufficient to enable me to live, my heart is sufficient to enable me to love. I am troublesome to you, perhaps odious; remove me from you, and leave me only that image wherein his soul breathes, or wherein I think at least I see it breathe. I will see it, I will speak to it; I will persuade myself that it sees my tears flow, that it hears my sighs, and that it is touched by them.'—'And wherefore, my dear Coraly, nourish this cruel flame, which devours you? I afflict you, but it is for your good, and Nelson's peace. Would you render him unhappy? He will be so, if he knows that you love him, and still more so, if he loves you. You are not in a condition to hear my reasons; but this inclination, which you think so sweet, would be the poison of his life. Have pity, my dear child, on your friend, and my brother; spare him the remorse, the complaints, which would bring him to his grave.' Coraly trembled at this discourse. She pressed Lady Albury to tell her how Nelson's love for her could be so fatal to him. 'To explain myself farther,' said Juliet, 'would be to render odious to you what you ought for ever to cherish. But the most sacred of all duties forbids him the hope of being yours.'

How is it possible to express the distress into which Coraly's soul was plunged? 'What manners, what a country!' said she, 'wherein one cannot dispose of one's self; wherein the first of all blessings, mutual love, is a terrible evil! I must tremble then at seeing Nelson again! I must tremble at pleasing him! At pleasing him! alas! I would give my life to be one moment in his eyes as amiable as he is in mine. Let me banish myself from this fatal shore, where it is made a misfortune to be loved.'

Coraly heard, every day, of vessels sailing for her country. She resolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that in kissing her hand, her lips pressed her more tenderly than usual, and that some profound sighs escaped her. 'She leaves me more moved than ever before,' said Juliet, alarmed. 'Her eyes are fixed on mine, with the most lively expression of tenderness and sorrow. What passes in her soul?' This uneasiness disturbed her the whole night, and the next morning she sent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that she was gone out alone, and in a very plain dress, and that she had taken the way to the water-side. Lady Albury gets up in distress, and orders them to go in pursuit of the Indian. They find her on board a vessel, begging her passage, environed by sailors; whom her beauty, her graces, her youth, the sound of her voice, and, above all, the native simplicity of her request, ravished with surprise and admiration. She had nothing with her but bare necessaries. Every thing they had given her which was valuable she had left behind, excepting a little heart of crystal, which she had received from Nelson.

At the name of Lady Albury, she submitted without resistance, and suffered herself to be reconveyed home. She appeared before her a little confused at her elopement, but to her reproaches she answered,

that she was unhappy and free. 'What, my dear Coraly! do you see nothing here but unhappiness?'—'If I saw here only my own,' said she, 'I should never leave you. It is Nelson's unhappiness that frights me, and it is for his peace that I would fly.'

Juliet knew not what to reply: she durst not talk to her of the rights which Blandford had acquired over her: this would have been to make her hate him, as the cause of her unhappiness. She chose rather to lessen her fears. 'I could not conceal from you,' said she to her, 'all the danger of a fruitless love; but the evil is not without remedy. Six months of absence, reason, friendship, how can we tell? Another object, perhaps . . . .' The Indian interrupted her. 'Say death: there is my only remedy. What! will reason cure me of loving the most accomplished, the most worthy of men! Will six months of absence give me a soul that loves him not? Does time change nature? Friendship will pity me; but will it cure me? Another object! . . . . You do not think so. You do not do me that injustice. There are not two Nelsons in the world; but though there were a thousand, I have but one heart: that is given away. It is, you say, a fatal gift: that I do not comprehend; but if it be so, suffer me to banish myself from Nelson, to hide from him my person and my tears. He is not insensible, he will be moved at it; and if it be a misfortune to him to love me, pity might lead him to it. Alas! who can, with indifference, see himself cherished as a father, revered as a god! Who can see himself loved as I love him, and not love in his turn?'—'You will not expose him to that danger,' replied Juliet; 'you will conceal your weakness from him, and you will triumph over it. No, Coraly, it is not the strength that is wanting to you, but the courage of virtue.'—'Alas! I have courage against misfortune; but is there any against love? And what virtue would you have me oppose to him? They all act in concert with him. No,

my lady, you talk to no purpose: you throw clouds over my understanding; you shed not the least light on it. Let me see and hear Nelson: he shall decide upon my life.'

Lady Albury, in the most cruel perplexity, seeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be suffered to depart, resolved to write to Nelson; that he might come and persuade the poor girl from her design of returning to India, and preserve her from that disgust of life which daily consumed her. But Nelson himself was not less to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, but he perceived the danger of seeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leave her. All that had appeared only play to him with her, became serious, on being deprived of her. In the silence of solitude, he had interrogated his soul: he had found there friendship languishing, zeal for the public good weakened, nay, almost extinguished, and love alone ruling there, with that sweet and terrible sway which he exercises over good hearts. He perceived, with horror, that his very reason had suffered itself to be seduced. The rights of Blandford were no longer so sacred; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly's heart was at least very excusable; after all, the Indian was free, and Blandford himself would not have wished to impose it on her as a duty to be his. 'Ah, wretch!' cried Nelson, terrified at these ideas; 'whither does a blind passion lead me astray! The poison of vice gains upon me: my heart is already corrupted. Is it for me to examine whether the charge which is committed to me belong to the person who commits it? And am I made the judge to whom it belongs, when I have promised to keep it? The Indian is free; but am I so? Should I doubt the rights of Blandford, if it were not in order to usurp them? My crime was, at first, involuntary; but it is no longer so, the moment I consent to it: *I* justify perjury! *I* think a faithless friend excusable! Who

would have told thee, Nelson, who would have told thee that, on embracing the virtuous Blandford, thou shouldest call in doubt whether it were permitted to thee to ravish from him the woman who is to be his wife, and whom he delivered up to thy trust? To what a degree does love debase a man! and what a strange revolution its intoxication makes in a heart! Ah! let him rend mine, if he will; he shall not make it either perfidious or base; and if my reason abandon me, my conscience at least shall not betray me. Its light is incorruptible: the cloud of passions cannot obscure it: there is my guide; and friendship, honour, and fidelity, have still some support.'

In the mean time Coraly's image pursued him perpetually. If he had only seen her with all her charms, arrayed in simple beauty, bearing in her countenance the serenity of innocence, the smile of candour on her lips, the fire of desire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her person the attracting air of voluptuousness, he would have found in his principles, in the severity of his manners, sufficient force to withstand seduction; but he thought he saw that amiable girl as sensible as himself, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herself to an inclination which would be her unhappiness; and the pity which she inspired him with served as fuel to his love. Nelson blamed himself for loving Coraly, but forgave himself for pitying her. Sensible of the evils which he was on the point of being the cause of, he could not paint to himself her tears without thinking of the fine eyes which were to shed them, and the heaving bosom which they would bedew: thus the resolution of forgetting her rendered her still dearer to him. He attached himself to her by renouncing her: but in proportion as he perceived himself weaker, he became more courageous. 'Let me give over,' said he, 'the thoughts of a cure: I exhaust myself in

fruitless efforts. It is a fit which I must suffer to go off. I burn, I languish, I die; but all that is mere suffering, and I am answerable to nobody but myself for what passes within. Provided nothing escape me from without, that discovers my passion, my friend has no reason to complain. It is only a misfortune to be weak; and I have the courage to be unhappy.'

It was in this resolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendship, that he received the letter from his sister. He read it with an emotion, an ecstasy that was inexpressible. 'O, sweet and tender victim,' said he, 'thou groanest, thou wouldest sacrifice thyself to my repose, and to my duty! Pardon! Heaven is my witness, that I feel, more strongly than thyself, all the pangs which I occasion thee. Oh! may my friend, thy husband, soon arrive, and wipe away thy precious tears! He will love thee as I love thee; he will make his own happiness thine. However, I must see her, in order to detain and console her. Why should I see her? To what do I expose myself! Her touching graces, her sorrow, her love, her tears, which I occasion to flow, and which it would be so sweet to dry up, those sighs which a heart, simple and artless, suffers to escape, that language of nature, in which a soul the most sensible paints itself with so much candour: what trials to support! What will become of me? And what can I say to her? No matter: I must see her, and talk to her as a friend and a father. After seeing her, I only shall be the more uneasy, the more unhappy for it: but it is not my own peace that is in question; it is hers; and above all, the happiness of a friend depends on it; a friend for whom she must live. I am certain of subduing myself; and how painful soever the contest may be, it would be a weakness and shame to avoid it.'

At Nelson's arrival, Coraly, trembling and confused, scarce dared present herself to him. She

had wished his return with ardour, and, at seeing him, a mortal chilness glided through her veins. She appeared, as it were, before a judge who was preparing, with one single word, to decide her fate.

What were Nelson's feelings, on seeing the roses of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks, and the fire of her eyes almost extinguished! 'Come,' said Juliet to her brother, 'appease the mind of this poor girl, and cure her of her melancholy. She is eaten up with the vapours with me; she wants to return to India.'

Nelson, speaking to her in a friendly manner, wanted to engage her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herself before his sister; but Coraly kept silence; and Juliet, perceiving that she was a restraint upon her, went away.

'What is the matter with you, Coraly? What have we done to you?' said Nelson. 'What sorrow presses you?'—'Do not you know it? Must you not have seen that my joy and my sorrow can no longer have more than one cause? Cruel friend, I live only through you, and you fly me; you would have me die!... But you would not have it so; they make you do it: they do more, they require of me to renounce you, and to forget you. They fright me, they damp my very soul, and they oblige you to make me distracted. I ask of you but one favour,' continued she, throwing herself at his knees: 'it is to tell me whom I offend in loving you, what duty I betray, and what evil I occasion. Are there here laws so cruel, are there tyrants so rigorous, as to forbid me the most worthy use of my heart and my reason? Must we love nothing in the world? or, if I may love, can I make a better choice?'

'My dear Coraly,' replied Nelson, 'nothing is truer, nothing is more tender than the friendship which attaches me to you. It would be impossible, it would be even unjust that you should not be sensible of it.'—'Ah! I revive: this is talking reason.'

—'But though it would be extremely agreeable to me to be what you hold dearest in the world, it is what I cannot pretend, neither ought I even to consent to it.'—'Alas! now I don't understand you.'—'When my friend confided you to my care, he was dear to you?'—'He is so still.'—'You would have thought yourself happy to be his?'—'I believe it.'—'You loved nothing so much as him in the world?'—'I did not know you.'—'Blandford, your deliverer, the depositary of your innocence, in loving you, has a right to be loved.'—'His favours are always present to me; I cherish him as a second father.'—'Very well, know that he has resolved to unite you to him by a tie still more sweet and sacred than that of his favours. He has confided to me the half of himself, and at his return he aspires only to the happiness of being your husband.'—'Ah!' said Coraly, comforted, 'this then is the obstacle which separates us? Be easy; it is removed.'—'How?'—'Never, never, I swear to you, will Coraly be the wife of Blandford.'—'It must be so,'—'Impossible; Blandford himself will confess it.'—'What! He who received you from the hand of a dying father, and who himself has acted as a father to you!'—'Under that sacred title I revere Blandford; but let him not require more.'—'You have then resolved his unhappiness?'—'I have resolved to deceive nobody. If I were given to Blandford, and Nelson demanded my life of me, I would lay down my life for Nelson; I should be perjured to Blandford.'—'What say you?'—'What I will dare to tell Blandford himself. And why should I dissemble it? Does love depend on myself?'—'Ah, how culpable you make me!'—'You! In what? In being amiable in my eyes? Ay, Heaven disposes of us. Heaven has given to Nelson those graces, those virtues, which charm me: Heaven has given to me this soul, which it has made expressly for Nelson. If they knew how full it is of him, how impossible that it should love any thing

but you, any thing like you! . . . Let them never talk to me of living, if it be not for you that I live.'—'And this is what distresses me. With what reproaches has not my friend a right to overwhelm me?'—'He! of what can he complain? What has he lost? What have you taken from him? I love Blandford as a tender father; I love Nelson as myself, and more than myself: these sentiments are not incompatible. If Blandford delivered me into your hands as a deposit which was his own, it is not you, it is he that is unjust.'—'Alas! it is me, who obliges you to reclaim from him that treasure of which I rob him: it would be his if it were not mine; and the keeper becomes the purloiner.'—'No, my friend, be equitable; I was my own, I am yours. I alone could give myself away, and have given myself to you. By attributing to friendship rights which it has not, it is you that usurp them in its behalf, and you render yourself an accomplice of the violence which they do me.'—'He, my friend! do you violence?'—'What signifies it to me whether he does it himself, or that you do it for him? Am I treated the less like a slave? One single interest occupies and touches you; but if another than your friend wanted to retain me captive, far from subscribing to it, would not you make it your glory to set me free? It is then only for the sake of friendship that you betray nature! What do I say? nature! and love, Nelson, love, has not that also its rights? Is there not some law among you in favour of sensible souls? Is it just and generous to overwhelm, to drive to despair a fond female, and to tear, without pity, a heart whose only crime is loving you?'

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelson, who saw her choked with them, had not even time to call his sister. He hastens to untie the ribands which bound her bosom; and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this passionate lover. The terror with which he

was seized rendered him at first insensible of them; but when the Indian, resuming her spirits, and perceiving herself pressed in his arms, thrilled with love and transport, and when, on opening her fine languishing eyes, she sought the eyes of Nelson; 'Heavenly powers,' said he, 'support me! all my virtue abandons me. Live, my dear Coraly!'—'Would you that I should live, Nelson! would you then that I love you?'—'No, I should be perjured to friendship; I should be unworthy to see the light; unworthy of seeing my friend again. Alas! he foretold me this, and I vouchsafed not to believe him. I have presumed too much on my own heart. Have pity of it, Coraly, of that heart which you rend to pieces. Suffer me to fly you, and to subdue myself.'—'Ah! you would have my death,' said she to him, falling into a fit at his feet. Nelson, who thinks he sees what he loves expiring, rushes to embrace her, and restraining himself suddenly at the sight of Juliet, 'My sister,' said he, 'assist her: it is for me to die.' On saying these words he withdraws.

'Where is he?' demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes. 'What have I done to him? Why fly me? And you, Juliet, more cruel still, why recal me to life?' Her sorrow redoubled, when she learned that Nelson was just gone; but reflection gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderness which Nelson had not been able to conceal, the terror with which she had seen him seized, the tender words which had escaped him, and the violence which it was to him to subdue himself and withdraw, all persuaded her that she was beloved. 'If it be true,' said she, 'I am happy. Blandford will return, I will confess the whole to him; he is too just and too generous to want to tyrannise over me.' But this illusion was soon dissipated.

Nelson received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. 'I hope,' said he, at the end of his letter, 'to see myself, in three

days, united to all that I love. Pardon, my friend, if I associate to thee in my heart the amiable and tender Coraly. My soul was a long time solely devoted to thee, now she partakes of it. I have confided to thee the sweetest of my wishes, and I have seen friendship applaud love. I form my happiness, both of one and the other; I make it my felicity to think that by thy cares and those of thy sister, I shall see my dear pupil again, her mind ornamented with new acquirements, her soul enriched with new virtues, more amiable if possible, and more disposed to love. It will be the purest bliss to me to possess her as a benefit conferred by you.'

'Read this letter,' writ Nelson to his sister, 'and make Coraly read it. What a lesson for me! What a reproach to her!'

'It is over,' said Coraly after having read, 'I shall never be Nelson's; but let him not ask me to be another's. The liberty of loving is a good which I am not able to renounce.' This resolution supported her; and Nelson in his solitude was much more unhappy than she.

'By what fatality,' said he, 'is it, that what forms the charm of nature and the delight of all hearts, the happiness of being loved, forms my torment? What say I? Of being loved? That is nothing; but to be loved of what I love? To touch on happiness! To have only to deliver myself up to it! . . . . Ah! all that I am able to do is to fly: inviolable and sacred friendship asks no more. In what a condition have I seen this poor girl! In what a condition did I abandon her! She may well say, that she is the slave of my virtues. I sacrifice her as a victim, and I am generous at her expense. There are then virtues which wound nature; and to be honest, one is sometimes obliged to be unjust and cruel! O, my friend! mayest thou gather the fruit of the efforts which it costs me, enjoy the good

which I resign to thee, and live happy from my misfortune. Yes, I wish that she may love thee; I wish it, Heaven is my witness; and the most sensible of all my pains is that of doubting the success of my wishes.'

It was impossible for nature to support herself in a state so violent. Nelson, after long struggles, sought repose; alas! there was no more repose for him. His constancy was at last exhausted, and his discouraged soul fell into a mortal languor. The weakness of his reason, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image of a painful and sorrowful life, the void and the state of annihilation into which his soul would fall, if it ceased to love Coraly, the evils without intermission which he was to suffer if he continued to love her, and, above all, the terrifying idea of seeing, of envying, of hating perhaps, a rival in his faithful friend, all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to shorten the course of it. Motives more strong restrained him. It was not a part of Nelson's principles that a man, a citizen, might dispose of himself. He made it a law to himself to live, consoled in his misery if he could still be useful to the world, but consumed with heaviness and sorrow, and become as it were insensible to every thing.

The time appointed for Blandford's return approached. It was necessary that every thing should be so disposed as to conceal from him the mischief which his absence had occasioned: and who should determine Coraly to conceal it, but Nelson? He returned therefore to London: but languishing, dejected, to such a degree as not to be known. The sight of him overwhelmed Juliet with grief, and what impression did it not make on the soul of Coraly! Nelson took upon him to re-encourage them; but that very effort only served to complete his own dejection. The slow fever which consumed him redoubled; he was forced to give way

to it; and this furnished occasion for a new contest between his sister and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelson's pillow. She urgently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herself, and for the sake of sparing him; but she tasted not the repose which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the diseased, or motionless on the threshold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her soul on her lips, her ear attentive to the slightest noises, every one of which congealed her with fear.

Nelson perceived that his sister suffered her to see him with regret. 'Afflict her not,' said he to her; 'it is to no purpose; severity is no longer necessary. It is by gentleness and patience that we must endeavour at our cure.'—'Coraly, my good friend,' said he to her one day when they were alone with Juliet, 'you would readily give something to restore my health, would not you?'—'O heaven! I would give my life.'—'You can cure me at least. Our prejudices are, perhaps, unjust, and our principles inhuman: but the honest man is a slave to them. I have been Blandford's friend from my infancy. He depends on me as on himself, and the chagrin of taking from him a heart of which he has made me the keeper, is every day digging my grave. You may see whether I exaggerate. I do not conceal from you the source of the slow poison which consumes me. You alone can dry it up. I require it not: you shall be still free; but there is no other remedy for my disease. Blandford arrives. If he perceives your disinclination for him, if you refuse him that hand which but for me would have been granted him, be assured that I shall not survive his misfortune and my own remorse. Our embraces will be our adieus. Consult yourself, my dear child, and if you would that I live, reconcile me with myself, justify me towards my friend.'—'Ah!

live, and dispose of me,' said Coraly to him, forgetting herself; and these words, distressing to love, bore joy to the bosom of friendship.

'But,' resumed the Indian after a long silence, 'how can I give myself to him whom I do not love, with a heart full of him whom I do love?'—'My dear, in an honest soul, duty triumphs over every thing. By losing the hope of being mine, you will soon lose the thought. It will give you some pain without doubt, but my life depends on it, and you will have the consolation of having saved it.'—'That is every thing to me: I give myself up at that price. Sacrifice your victim: it will groan, but it will obey. But you, Nelson, you who are truth itself, would you have me disguise my inclinations, and impose thus on your friend? Will you instruct me in the art of dissembling?'—'No, Coraly, dissimulation is useless. I have not had the misfortune of extinguishing in you gratitude, esteem, and tender friendship; these sentiments are due to your benefactor, and they are sufficient for your husband: only display these towards him. As to that inclination which leans not towards him, you owe him the sacrifice of it, but not the confession. That which would hurt, if it were known, ought to remain for ever concealed; and dangerous truth has silence for its refuge.'

Juliet interrupted this scene, too painful to both, by leading away Coraly, whom she employed every endearment and commendation to console. 'It is thus,' said the young Indian, with a smile of sorrow, 'that on the Ganges they flatter the grief of a widow, who is going to devote herself to the flames of her husband's funeral pile. They adorn her, they crown her with flowers, they stupefy her with songs of praise. Alas! her sacrifice is soon finished: mine will be cruel and lasting. My good friend, I am not eighteen years of age! What tears have I yet to shed till the moment when my eyes shall shut themselves for ever!' This melancholy idea

painted to Juliet a soul absorbed in sorrow. She employed herself no longer in consoling her, but in grieving along with her. Complaisance, persuasion, indulgent and feeling compassion, all that friendship has most delicate, was put in practice to no effect.

At last, they inform her that Blandford is landed; and Nelson, enfeebled and faint as he is, goes to receive and embrace him at the harbour. Blandford, on seeing him, could not conceal his astonishment and his uneasiness. 'Courage, man,' said Nelson; 'I have been very ill: but my health is returning. I see you again, and joy is a balm which will soon revive me. I am not the only one whose health has suffered by your absence. Your pupil is a little changed: the air of our climate may contribute to it. As to the rest, she has made a great progress: her understanding, her talents have unfolded themselves; and if the kind of languor into which she is fallen vanishes, you will possess what is pretty uncommon, a woman in whom nature has left nothing wanting.'

Blandford, therefore, was not surprised to find Coraly weak and languishing; but he was much affected at it. 'It seems,' said he, 'as if Heaven wanted to moderate my joy, and to punish me for the impatience which my duty excited in me at a distance from you. I am now here again free and restored to love and friendship.' The word *love* made Coraly tremble: Blandford perceived her concern. 'My friend,' said he to her, 'ought to have prepared you for the confession which you have just heard.'—'Yes, your goodness is well known to me: but can I approve the excess of it?'—'That is a language which savours of the politeness of Europe: join with me to forget it. Frank and tender Coraly, I have seen the time, when if I had said, shall Hymen unite us? you would have answered me without disguise, 'With all my heart,' or possibly, 'I cannot consent to it:' use

the same freedom now. I love you, Coraly, but I love to make you happy: your misfortune would be mine.' Nelson, trembling, looked at Coraly, and durst not guess her answer. 'I hesitate,' said she to Blandford, 'through a fear like yours. While I saw you only as a friend, a second father, I said to myself, he will be content with my veneration and affectionate regard; but if the name of husband mingle with titles already sacred, what have you not a right to expect? Have I wherewith to acquit me towards you?'—'Ah! that amiable modesty is worthy of adorning thy virtues. Yes, thou half of myself, your duties are fulfilled, if you return my affection. Thy image has followed me every where. My soul flew back towards thee across the depths which separated us: I have taught the name of Coraly to the echoes of another world. Madam,' said he to Juliet, 'pardon me, if I envy you the happiness of possessing her. It will soon be my turn to watch over a health which is so precious to me. I will leave you the care of Nelson's: it is a charge not less dear to me. Let us live happy, my friends: it is you who have made me know the value of life; and, in exposing it, I have often experienced by what strong ties I was attached to you.'

It was settled, that in less than a week Coraly should be married to Blandford. In the mean time, she remained with Juliet, and Nelson never quitted her. But his courage was exhausted in supporting the young Indian's. To be perpetually constrained to suppress his own tears, to dry up those of a fond girl, who sometimes distressed at his feet, sometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjuring him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weakness, and without ceasing to recal to his mind his cruel resolution,—this trial appears above the strength of nature: accordingly Nelson's virtue abandoned him every moment. 'Leave me,' said he to her, 'un-

happy girl! I am not a tiger; I have a feeling soul, and you distract it. Dispose of yourself, dispose of my life; but leave me to die faithful to my friend.'—'And can I, at the hazard of your life, use my own will? Ah, Nelson! at least promise me to live; no longer for me, but for a sister who adores you.'—'I should deceive you, Coraly. Not that I would make any attempt upon myself; but see the condition to which my grief has reduced me; see the effect of my remorse and shame anticipated; shall I be the less odious, less inexorable to myself, when the crime shall be accomplished?'—'Alas! you talk of a crime! Is it not one then to tyrannise over me?'—'You are free; I no longer require any thing; I know not even what are your duties; but I know too well my own, and I will not betray them.'

It was thus that their private conversation served only to distress them. But Blandford's presence was still more painful to them. He came every day to converse with them, not on the barren topics of love, but the care he took, that every thing in his house should breathe cheerfulness and ease, that every thing there should forestall the desires of his wife, and contribute to her happiness. 'If I die without children,' said he, 'the half of my wealth is hers; the other half is his who, after me, shall know how to please and to console her for having lost me. That, Nelson, is your place; there is no growing old in my profession: take my place when I shall be no more. I have not the odious pride of wanting my wife to continue faithful to my shade. Coraly is formed to embellish the world, and to enrich nature with the fruits of her fecundity.'

It is more easy to conceive than describe the situation of our two lovers. Their concern and confusion were the same in both; but it was a kind of consolation to Nelson to see Coraly in such worthy hands, whereas Blandford's favours and

love were an additional torment to her. On losing Nelson, she would have preferred the desertion of all nature to the cares, the favours, the love of all the world beside. It was decided, however, even with the consent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to hesitate, and that it was necessary she should submit to her fate.

She was led then as a victim to that house, which she had cherished as her first asylum, but which she now dreaded as her grave. Blandford received her there as sovereign: and what she could not conceal of the violent state of her soul, he attributes to timidity, to the concern which, at her age, the approach of marriage inspires.

Nelson had summoned up all the strength of a stoical soul, in order to present himself at this festival with a serene countenance.

They read the settlement which Blandford had made. It was from one end to the other a monument of love, esteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's.

Blandford approaches respectfully, and stretching out his hand to her, 'Come,' said he, 'my best-beloved, give to this pledge of your fidelity, to this title of the happiness of my life, the inviolable sanctity with which it is to be clothed.'

Coraly, on doing herself the utmost violence, had scarce strength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the instant she would have signed, her eyes were covered with a mist; her whole body was seised with a sudden trembling; her knees bent under her, and she was on the point of falling, if Blandford had not supported her. Shocked, congealed with fear, he looks at Nelson, and sees him with the paleness of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had ran up to Coraly, in order to assist her: 'O Heaven,' cries Blandford, 'what is it that I see! Sorrow, death, surround me. What was I going to do? What have you concealed from me? Ah! my friend, could it be possible! See

the light again, my dear Coraly; I am not cruel, I am not unjust; I wish only for your happiness.'

The women who surrounded Coraly exerted themselves to revive her; and decency obliged Nelson and Blandford to keep at a distance. But Nelson remained immoveable, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like a criminal. Blandford comes up to him, and clasps him in his arms. 'Am I no longer thy friend?' said he; 'art thou not still the half of myself? Open thy heart to me, and tell me what has passed . . . . . No, tell me nothing: I know all. This poor girl could not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, without loving thee. She has sensibility; she has been touched with thy goodness, and thy virtues. Thou hast condemned her to silence, thou hast required of her the most grievous sacrifice. Ah, Nelson! had it been accomplished, what a misfortune! Just Heaven would not permit it; nature, to whom thou didst violence, has resumed her rights. Do not afflict thyself: it is a crime which she has spared thee. Yes, the devotion of Coraly was the crime of friendship.'—'I confess it,' replied Nelson, throwing himself at his knees; 'I have been the innocent cause of thy unhappiness, of my own, and that of this amiable girl; but I call fidelity, friendship, honour, to witness . . . .'—'No oaths,' interrupted Blandford: 'they wrong us both. Go, my friend,' continued he, raising him, 'thou wouldst not be in my arms, if I had been able to suspect thee of a shameful perfidy. What I foresaw is come to pass, but without thy consent. What I have just now seen is a proof of it, and that very proof is unnecessary: thy friend has no need of it.'—'It is certain,' replied Nelson, 'that I have nothing to reproach myself, but my presumption and imprudence. But that is enough, and I shall be punished for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will not be hers.'—'Is it thus that you answer a generous friend?' replied Blandford to

him, in a firm and grave tone of voice. 'Do you think yourself obliged to observe childish punctilios with me? Coraly shall not be mine, because she would not be happy with me. But an honest man for a husband, whom but for you she would have loved, is a loss to her, of which you are the cause, and which you must repair. The contract is drawn up, they shall change the names; but I insist that the articles remain. What I meant to give Coraly as a husband, I now give her as a father. Nelson, make me not blush by an humiliating refusal.'—'I am confounded, and not surprised,' said Nelson, 'at this generosity which overpowers me. I must subscribe to it with confusion, and revere it in silence. If I knew not how well respect reconciles itself to friendship, I should no longer dare to call you my friend.'

During this conversation Coraly had recovered, and again saw with terror the light which was restored to her. But what was her surprise, and the revolution which was suddenly wrought in her soul! 'All is known, all is forgiven,' said Nelson, embracing her; 'fall at the feet of our benefactor: from his hand I receive yours.' Coraly would have been profuse in her acknowledgments: 'You are a child,' said Blandford to her: 'you should have told me every thing. Let us talk no more of it; but let us never forget that there are trials, to which virtue itself would do well not to expose herself.'

THE

MISANTHROPE CORRECTED.

THERE is no correcting the natural disposition, they will tell me, and I agree to it; but among a thousand combined accidents which compose a character, what eye is sufficiently fine to distinguish that indelible characteristic? How many vices and irregularities are attributed to nature, which she never occasioned? Such is, in man, the hatred of mankind: it is a factitious character; a part which we take up out of whim, and maintain through habit; but in acting which, the soul is under restraint, from which she struggles to be delivered. What happened to the Misanthrope, whom Moliere has painted, is an instance of it: and we are now going to see how he was brought to himself again.

Alcestes, dissatisfied, as you know, with his mistress, and his judges, detesting the city and court, and resolved to fly mankind, retired very far from Paris, into the Voges, near Laval, on the banks of the Vologne. This river, whose shells contain the pearl, is still more valuable on account of the fertility which it communicates to its borders. The valley which it waters is a beautiful meadow. On one side arise smiling hills, interspersed with woods and hamlets; on the other extend, in a plain, vast fields covered with corn. Thither Alcestes retired, to live forgotten by all nature. Free from cares and duties, wholly resigned to himself, and at length delivered from the hateful sight of the world, he praised Heaven for having broken all his connexions. A little study, much exercise,

the less lively but tranquil pleasures of a gentle vegetation, in one word, a life peaceably active, preserved him from the dulness of solitude; he desired, he regretted nothing.

One of the pleasures of his retreat was to see around him the earth, cultivated and fertile, nourish a people who seemed to be happy. A misanthrope, who is such from virtue, thinks that he hates men, only because he loves them. Alcestes felt an emotion mingled with joy, at the sight of his fellow-creatures, rich by the labour of their own hands. 'These people,' said he, 'are very happy in being yet half savages: they would soon be corrupted if they were more civilized.'

Walking in the fields, he accosts a labourer, ploughing and singing. 'God preserve you, good man,' said he to him; 'you are very merry!'—'According to custom,' replied the villager. 'I am very glad of it: it proves that you are content with your condition.'—'And well I may.'—'Are you married?'—'Yes, thank Heaven.'—'Have you any children?'—'I had five; I have lost one; but that loss may be repaired.'—'Is your wife young?'—'Twenty-five.'—'Is she handsome?'—'She is so to me; but she is better than handsome, she is good.'—'And you love her?'—'Love her! who would not love her?'—'She loves you too, without doubt?'—'O, as to that, most heartily, and as well as before marriage.'—'You loved one another then before marriage?'—'Or else should we have taken each other?'—'And your children, do they come on well?'—'Ah, that is a pleasure. The eldest is but five; he has more wit than his father already. And my two girls! they are charming. It would be a very great pity if they should want husbands! The youngest boy sucks still; but the little rogue will be a sturdy fellow. Would you believe it? He beats his sisters, when they go to kiss their mother. He is afraid that they are coming to take the breast

from him.'—'All this is very happy!'—'Happy? I think so. You should see our joy, when I return from work. You would think they had not seen me for a year: I know not which to listen to. My wife hangs upon my neck, my daughters jump into my arms, my eldest boy seizes me by the legs, not one of them, even to little Jackey himself, who, rolling on his mother's bed, stretches out his little hands to me; while I laugh and cry, and kiss them; for all this moves me.'—'I believe it.'—'You ought to feel it, for to be sure you are a father.'—'I have not that happiness.'—'So much the worse: there is no other joy.'—'And how do you live?'—'Very well; upon excellent bread, good milk, and the fruits of our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, makes a supper of cabbage, of which the king himself might eat. Then we have the eggs of our fowls; and on Sundays we regale ourselves, and drink a cup of wine.'—'Yes, but when the year turns out bad?'—'We are prepared for it, and live comfortably on what we have saved in a good one.'—'Ay, but the rigour of the weather, the cold, the rain, the heats?'—'We are accustomed to them; and if you knew what pleasure we have in coming in the evening to breathe the fresh air, after a summer's day; or, in winter, to unnumb one's hands at a fire of good brush-wood, between one's wife and one's children! And then we sup heartily, and go to sleep; and do you think that we ever bestow a thought upon the bad weather? Sometimes my wife says to me: My good man, do you hear the wind and the storm? Ah, if you were now in the fields!—I am not there, I am with thee, I tell her; and in order to assure her of it, I press her against my bosom. Ah, sir! there are a great many of the fine people who do not live so happy as we.'—'And the taxes?'—'We pay them cheerfully: it must be so. All the country cannot be noble. The lord of the manor, and the judge, cannot come to labour. They supply our wants,

we supply theirs; and every state of life, as it is said, has its troubles.'—'What equity!' said the misanthrope. 'There now, in two words, is the whole economy of primitive society. O Nature! there is nothing just but thee: it is in thy uncultivated simplicity that we find sound reason. But in paying the tribute so well, do not you give room to be charged more heavily?'—'We used to fear it formerly; but, thank God, the lord of the manor has freed us from that uneasiness. He performs the duty of our good king: he imposes, he receives himself, and in cases of necessity he makes the advances. He takes care of us, as if we were his children.'—'And who is this gallant man?'—'The Viscount de Laval. He is well enough known: the whole country respects him.'—'Does he reside in his castle?'—'He passes eight months of the year there.'—'And the rest?'—'At Paris, I believe.'—'Does he see company?'—'The townsmen of Bruyers, and sometimes our old folks, who go to eat his soup, and to chatter with him.'—'And does he bring any body from Paris?'—'Nobody but his daughter.'—'He is very much in the right. And how does he employ himself?'—'In judging us, reconciling us, marrying our children, maintaining peace in our families, and assisting them when the seasons are bad.'—'I will go,' said Alcestes, 'to see his village: it must be moving.'

He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but having met people busied in keeping them even, 'Ah,' said he, 'there are the statute-labourers.'—'Statute-labourers!' replied an old man, who presided over these works, 'we know none such here: these people are paid: nobody is constrained. Only, if there come to the village a vagabond, an idle fellow, I am sent to him; and if he wants bread, he earns it, or he goes to seek it elsewhere.'—'And who has established this happy policy?'—'Our good lord, the father to us all.'—

'And the funds for this expense, who provides them?'—'The community; and as she imposes them herself, it comes not to pass, as is seen elsewhere, that the rich are exempted at the charge of the poor.'

Alcestes redoubled his esteem for the wise and beneficent man who governed this little people. 'How powerful would a king be,' said he, 'and a state how happy, if all the great proprietors of lands would follow the example of this nobleman! But Paris absorbs both the wealth and the men: it strips, it carries away every thing.'

The first glance of the village presented him with the image of ease and health. He enters into a plain and large building, which was to appearance a public edifice, and there he finds a multitude of children, women, and old men, employed in useful labours. Idleness was not permitted, excepting to the last weakness. Infancy, almost at its issuing from the cradle, acquired the habit and relish of labour, and old age, at the brink of the grave, still exercised its trembling hands. The season in which the earth rests, assembled to the workhouse the vigorous men; and then the shuttle, the saw, and the hatchet, gave a new value to the productions of nature. 'I am not surprised,' said Alcestes, 'that these people should be exempt from vice and want. They are laborious, and perpetually employed.' He inquired how the workhouse had been established. 'Our good lord,' said they to him, 'advanced the money. It was but a small matter at first, and all was done at his risk, at his expense, and his profit; but after being well assured that it was advantageous, he gave up the undertaking to us: he interferes no longer, except in protecting it; and every year he gives to the village the tools of some one of our arts: it is the present he makes at the first wedding that is celebrated in the year.'—'I must see this man,' said Alcestes; 'his character pleases me.'

He advances into the village, and he observes a

house into which the people are going and coming with uneasiness. He demands the cause of these movements; they tell him that the head of the family is at the point of death. He enters, and sees an old man, who, with an expiring, but serene eye, seems to bid adieu to his children, who melt into tears around him. He distinguishes, in the midst of the crowd, a person moved, but less afflicted, who encourages and consoles them. By his plain and grave dress, he takes him for the physician of the village. 'Sir,' said he to him, 'be not surprised at seeing here a stranger. It is not an idle curiosity that brings me hither. These good people may have need of assistance at so melancholy a juncture; and I come . . . . . .'—'Sir,' said the viscount to him, 'my peasants thank you; I hope as long as I live, they will have need of nobody; and if money could prolong the days of a good man, this worthy father of a family should be restored to his children.'—'Ah, sir,' said Alcestes, on discovering Monsieur de Laval by this talk, 'pardon an uneasiness which I ought not to have had.'—'I am not offended,' replied M. de Laval, 'that a good deed should be disputed with me; but may I know who you are, and what brings you here?' At the name of Alcestes he recollected that censor of human nature whose rigour was so well known; but, without being intimidated, 'Sir,' said he, 'I am very glad to have you in my neighbourhood, and if I can be of service to you in any thing, I beg you to command me.'

Alcestes went to visit M. de Laval, and was received by him with that plain and serious gentility which proclaims neither the want nor desire of being connected.—'There now,' said he, 'is a man of some reserve; I like him the better for it.' He felicitated M. de Laval on the pleasures of his solitude. 'You come to live here,' said he, 'far from mankind, and you are very much in the right to fly from them!'—'I, sir! I do not fly from man-

kind. I have neither the weakness to fear them, the pride to despise them, nor the misfortune to hate them.' This answer came so home, that Alcestes was disconcerted at it. But he would support what he had set out with, and he began the satire of the world. 'I have lived in the world, as well as others,' said M. de Laval, 'and I have not found it so wicked. There are vices and virtues in it, good and evil, I confess; but nature is so compounded, we must know how to accommodate ourselves to it.'—'Ay, but,' said Alcestes, 'in that compound the good is so very small, and the evil so predominant, that the latter chokes up the former.'—'Ah, sir,' replied the viscount, 'if we were as strongly fired with the good as with the evil, if we used the same warmth in publishing it, and good examples were posted up as bad ones are, can you doubt but that the good ones would carry it on the balance? But gratitude speaks so low, and complaint declaims so loud, that we only hear the latter. Esteem and friendship are commonly moderate in their commendations: they imitate the modesty of the virtuous in praising them; whereas resentment and injury exaggerate every thing to excess. Thus we see not the good, but through a medium which lessens it, and we view the evil through a vapour which magnifies it.'

'Sir,' said Alcestes to the viscount, 'you make me wish to think like you; and though I might have on my side the melancholy truth, your mistake would be preferable.'—'Why, yes, without doubt: fretfulness is of no service. A fine part for a man to play, to be out of humour like a child, and get into a corner, to pout at all the world; and why? For the bickerings of the circle in which we live: as if all nature were an accomplice and responsible for the injuries at which we are hurt.'—'You are right,' said Alcestes: 'it would be unjust to render man a solitary animal; but how many griefs have we not to reproach them with in

common? Believe m[illegible]y prejudice has serious and weighty motives. Y[illegible] will do me justice, when you know me. Per[illegible]t me to see you often.' —'Often, that is difficult,' said the viscount: 'my time is very much taken up; and my daughter and I have our studies, which leave us little leisure; but sometimes, if you please, we will enjoy our neighbourhood at our ease, and without laying any constraint on each other: for the privilege of the country is to have it in our power to be alone when we have a mind.'

'This man is rare in his species,' said Alcestes on going away. 'And his daughter, who listened to us with the air of so tender a veneration for her father; this daughter, brought up under his eyes, accustomed to a plain life, pure manners, and pleasures that are innocent, will be an estimable woman, or I am very much mistaken; at least,' resumed he, 'unless they lead her astray in that Paris, where every thing is ruined.'

If we were to represent to ourselves delicacy and sentiment personified, we should have the idea of Ursula's beauty. (It was thus that Mademoiselle de Laval was called.) Her figure was such as imagination gives to the youngest of the graces. She was eighteen years complete, and by the freshness and regularity of her charms, one might see that nature had just put the last hand to her.—When unmoved, the lilies of her complexion prevailed over the roses; but on the slightest emotion of her soul, the roses effaced the lilies. It was little to have the colouring of flowers, her skin had also that fineness, and that down so soft, so velvet-like, which nothing has yet tarnished. But it was in the features of Ursula's countenance that a thousand charms varied perpetually, displayed themselves successively. In her eyes, sometimes a modest languor, a timid sensibility seemed to issue from her soul, and to express itself by her looks; sometimes a noble severity, and commanding with sweet-

ness, moderated the touching lustre of it; and we saw there reigning by turns severe decency, fearful modesty, and lively and tender voluptuousness. Her voice and mouth were of that kind which embellish every thing; her lips could not move without discovering new attractions; and when she condescended to smile, her very silence was ingenuous. Nothing more simple than her attire, and nothing more elegant. In the country, she let grow her hair, which was of a pale white, of the softest tint, and ringlets, which art could not hold captive, floated around her ivory neck, and waved down upon her beautiful bosom. The misanthrope had found in her the genteelest air, and the most decent conversation. 'It would be a pity,' said he, 'that she should fall into bad hands: she might make an accomplished woman. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I congratulate myself in having her father for a neighbour; he is an upright man, a gallant man: I do not believe that he has a very right way of thinking; but he has an excellent heart.'

Some days after, M. de Laval, in walking out, returned his visit; and Alcestes talked to him of the pleasure which he must have in making people happy. 'It is a fine example,' added he, 'and to the shame of mankind a pretty rare one! How many folks, richer and more powerful than you, are only a burthen to the people!'—'I neither excuse them nor blame them,' replied M. de Laval. 'To do good, there must be the power; and when we can we ought to know how to seize it. But think not that it is so easy to effect it. It is not sufficient to be dexterous enough; we must be also happy enough; we must know how to treat just, sensible, docile minds; and frequently a great deal of address and patience is necessary to lead on a people, naturally diffident and fearful, to what is advantageous to them.'—'Truly,' said Alcestes, 'it is the excuse which they make: but do you think it a

very solid one? And the obstacles which you have overcome, cannot they also conquer them?'—'I have been,' said M. de Laval, 'solicited by opportunity, and seconded by circumstances. This people, newly conquered, thought themselves undone without resource, and the moment that I held open my arms to them, their despair made them rush into them. At the mercy of an arbitrary impost, they had conceived so much terror, that they chose rather to endure their vexations than to show a little ease. The expenses of the levy aggravated the impost; these good people were overrated; and poverty was the asylum into which discouragement had thrown them. On my arrival here, I found established this distressing and destructive maxim to the country: *The more we labour the more we shall be trampled upon.* The men durst not be laborious, the women trembled at becoming fruitful. I went back to the source of the evil. I addressed myself to the man appointed to collect the tribute. 'Sir,' said I to him, 'my vassals groan under the burthens of constraint: I would wish to hear no more of it. Let us see what they owe yet of the year's impost; I am come to acquit them.'—'Sir,' replied the receiver to me, 'that cannot be.'—'Why so?' said I.—'It is not the rule.'—'How! not the rule to pay the king the tribute which he demands? to pay it him with the least expense possible, and with the least delay?'—'Yes,' said he, 'that is the king's interest, but not mine. What would become of me, if it were to be paid down? The expenses are the perquisites of my office.' To so good a reason I had no reply; and without insisting farther, went to see the intendant.—'I beg two favours of you,' said I to him: 'one, that I may be permitted, every year, to pay the tribute for my vassals; the other, that their district may experience only the variations of the public tax.' I obtained what I asked.

'Friends,' said I to my peasants, whom I as-

assembled at my arrival, 'I now give you notice, that it is in my hands you are to deposit for the future the just tribute which you owe to the king. No more vexations, no more expense. Every Sunday, at the parish bank, your wives shall bring their savings, and you will be insensibly cleared. Labour, cultivate your estates, increase their value to a hundred fold; may the ground enrich you; you shall not be charged the more for it: I, your father, will be answerable to you for it. Those who shall be deficient, I will assist; and a few days of the dead season of the year, employed on my works, will reimburse me what I advance.

'This plan was approved, and we have followed it. Our farmers' wives never fail to bring me their little offering. On receiving it, I encourage them; I tell them of our good king; they go away with tears in their eyes: thus I make an act of love of what they looked upon, before my time, as an act of servitude.

'The statute-works had their turn, and the intendant, who detested them, but knew not how to remedy them, was enchanted at the method which I had taken to exempt my village from them.

'Lastly, as there was here a great deal of superfluous time, and useless hands, I established the work-house, which you may have seen. It is the property of the community; they administer it under their own eyes: every one works there; but that labour is not sufficiently paid to divert them from working in the fields. The husbandman employs in it only the time which would otherwise be lost. The profit which they draw from it forms a fund which is employed in contributing to the militia, and to the expenses of public works. But an advantage, more precious still, from this establishment, is to have increased the human race. When children are a charge, we get no more than we are able to maintain; but from the moment that, at their issue from the cradle, they are able to pro-

vide for their own subsistence, nature delivers herself up to her attraction, without reserve or uneasiness. We seek the means of population; there is but one: the subsistence, the employment of mankind. As they are born only to live, we must ensure them a livelihood at their birth.'

'Nothing wiser than your principles, nothing more virtuous than your cares: but confess,' replied the misanthrope, 'that this good, important as it is, is not so difficult as to discourage those who love it; and that if there were men like you . . . . . .'— 'Say, rather, if they were so situated. I have had circumstances in my favour, and every thing depends upon that. We see what is right; we love it; we wish to effect it; but obstacles arise on every step we take. There needs but one to prevent it; and instead of one, there arise a thousand. I was here very much at my ease: not a man of credit had an interest in the evil which I meant to destroy; and how little would have been sufficient to prevent my being able to remedy it! Suppose, instead of a tractable attendant, I had been under the necessity of seeing, persuading, prevailing on an absolute man, jealous of his power, entirely led by his own opinions, or swayed by the counsels of his subaltern officers. Nothing of all this scheme could have taken place: they would have told me not to busy myself, but to let things of this kind alone. Thus it is that good-will remains often useless on the part of the rich. I know that you do not suspect it; but there is in your prejudices more caprice than you imagine.'

Alcestes, touched to the quick by this reproach, from a man whose esteem was to him of so great value, endeavoured to justify himself. He had told him of the lawsuit he had lost, of the coquette who had deceived him, and of all his subjects of complaint against human nature.

'Truly,' said the viscount to him, 'this was a mighty matter to make one uneasy! You go to

choose among a thousand women a giddy creature, who amuses herself, and makes a fool of you, as it were, with reason; you take, most seriously, that love of which she makes a mere diversion; who is to blame? But granting her wrong, are all women like her? What! because there are knaves among the men, are you and I the less honest on that account? In the individual, who hurts you, you hate the species! There is caprice, neighbour, there is caprice in this, you must agree.

'You have lost a cause which you thought just; but does not a suitor, who is a person of integrity, always think that he has a good cause? Are you alone more disinterested, more infallible than your judges? And if they have wanted lights, are they criminal for that? I, sir, when I see men devote themselves to a state of life which has many troubles in it, and very few pleasures, which imposes on their manners all the constraint of the most severe decorum, which requires an unremitted application, a steady recollection, a labour without any salary, where virtue herself is almost without lustre; when I see them environed with the luxury and pleasures of an opulent city, live retired, solitary, in the frugality, simplicity, and modesty of the first ages, I consider as a sacrilege the reproach of their equity. Now, such is the life of the greater part of the judges whom you accuse upon such slight foundations. It is not some giddy persons, whom you see fluttering in the world, that hold the balance of the laws. Till such time as they become more prudent, they have at least the modesty to be silent before consummate judges. The latter are sometimes mistaken, without doubt, because they are not angels; but they are less of men than you and I; and I will never be persuaded that a venerable old man, who, at the break of day, drags himself to the hall with a tottering pace, goes there to commit injustice.

'With regard to the court, there are so many

interests in it, so complicated, and so powerful, which thwart and oppose each other, that it is natural that men should there be more delivered up to their passions, and more wicked than elsewhere. But neither you nor I have passed through these great trials of ambition and envy: and it has depended, perhaps, on but a trifle, that we have not been, as well as others, false friends and base flatterers. Believe me, sir, few people have a right to settle the *police* of the world.'

'All honest people have that right,' said Alcestes; 'and if they would league themselves together, the wicked would not have so much audaciousness and credit in the world.'—'When that league is formed,' said M. de Laval, going away, 'we will both enrol ourselves in it. Till then, neighbour, I advise you to do without noise, in your little corner, the utmost good you can, by taking for a rule the love of mankind, and in reserving your hatred for a few sad exceptions.'

'It is a very great pity,' said Alcestes, when M. de Laval was gone, 'that goodness should be always accompanied with weakness, while wickedness has so much strength and vigour!'—'It is a very great pity,' said M. de Laval, 'that this honest man has taken a bias, which renders him useless to himself and others! He has uprightness, he loves virtue; but virtue is but a chimera without the love of human nature.' Thus both, judging each other, were displeased with one another.

An incident pretty singular rendered Alcestes still less at his ease with M. de Laval. The Baron of Blonsac, a right Gascon, a man of honour, but haughty, and a misanthrope in his manner, had married the Canoness of Remiremont, a relation of the viscount. His garrison was in Lorraine. He came to see M. de Laval; and whether it was to amuse himself, or to correct two misanthropes by means of each other, M. de Laval wanted to set them by the ears. He sent to invite Alcestes to dinner.

'Among men, table-talk turns pretty often upon politics; and the Gascon, from the moment they had dined, began laying on, and drinking at a great rate. 'I make no point of concealing it,' said he; 'I have taken an aversion to the world. I would be two thousand leagues out of my own country, and two thousand years removed from my own age. It is the country of whores and knaves; it is the age of favourites; intrigue and favour have done their parts, and have forgot nothing but merit. He that pays his court obtains every thing, and he that does his duty has nothing. Myself, for example, who have never known but to march where honour calls, and to fight as becomes a soldier, I am known by the enemy; but may the devil take me if either the ministry or the court know that I exist. If they were to hear any mention of me, they would take me for one of my grandfathers; and if they should be told that a cannon-ball had taken off my head, I will lay a wager they would ask if there were any more Blonzac's?'—'Why do not you show yourself?' said M. de Laval to him. 'There is no necessity to let one's-self be forgot.'—'Why, my lord, I show myself in the day of battle.'—'Is it at Paris that the colours are flying?'

In the midst of this talk, letters were brought M. de Laval from Paris. He asks leave to read them, 'in order to know,' said he, 'if there be any thing new;' and one of his letters informs him, that the command of the citadel, which he solicited for M. de Blonzac, without his knowledge, had just been granted him. 'Hold,' said he to him, 'there now is one who regards you.' Blonzac read, leaped with joy, and ran to embrace the viscount; but after the sally he had made, he durst not mention what had happened to him. Alcestes, believing he had found in him a second, did not fail in urging him. 'There,' said he, 'there now is an example of these acts of injustice which shock me: a man of birth, a good soldier, after having served the state, remains for-

gotten, unrewarded; and let them tell me now that all goes well.'—'Why,' replied Blonzac, 'we must be just: every thing goes not so ill as is said. Rewards are to be waited for a little; but they come in time. It is not the fault of the ministry, if more services are performed than there are rewards to be bestowed; and, in fact, they do what they can.' Alcestes was a little surprised at this change of language, and the apologetical tone which Blonzac assumed during the rest of the entertainment. 'Come,' said the viscount, 'in order to reconcile you, let us drink the commandant's health;' and he published what he had just learnt. 'I ask the gentleman's pardon,' said Alcestes, 'for having dwelt on his complaints: I did not know the reasons which he had to retract them.'—'I!' said Blonzac, 'I have no animosity, and I come to like a child.'—'You see,' resumed M. de Laval, 'that a misanthrope is to be brought back to reason.'—'Yes,' replied Alcestes, 'when he regulates his sentiments on his own personal interest.'—'Ah, sir,' said Blonzac, 'do you know any one who is warm for what touches him neither nearly, nor at a distance?'—'Every thing that concerns humanity,' replied Alcestes, 'touches a good man nearly; and doubt not but there are friends enough of the order to hate the evil as evil, without any respect to themselves.'—'I will believe it,' replied the Gascon, 'when I see any one uneasy at what passes in China; but as long as people are afflicted only at the hurt which they feel themselves, or which they may feel, I shall believe that they think only of themselves, while they have the air of being taken up with the thought of others. As for me, I am sincere; I never gave myself up as an advocate for the discontented. Let every one plead his own cause. I complained while I had reason to complain; I now make my peace with the world, as soon as I have reason to be satisfied with it.'

As much as the scene with Blonzac disturbed Al-

cestes, so much did it rejoice M. de Laval and his daughter. 'There,' said they, 'has our misanthrope received a good lesson.'

Whether it was shame or policy, he was some days without seeing them. He came again, however, one afternoon. The viscount was gone to the village: Mademoiselle de Laval received him; and on seeing himself alone with her, a transport seized him, which he had some difficulty to conceal.

'We have not had the honour of seeing you,' said she to him, 'since M. de Blonzac's visit; what say you to that gentleman?'—'Why, he is a man like the rest.'—'Not so much like the rest: he speaks with an open heart, he says what others conceal; and that frankness makes him, in my opinion, a pretty singular character.'—'Yes, mademoiselle, frankness is rare; and I am very glad to see that at your age you are convinced of it. You will often have occasion to recollect it, I promise you. Ah! in what a world you are going to fall! My lord excuses it in the best manner he is able; his own beautiful soul does the rest of mankind the honour to judge of them according to itself; but if you knew how dangerous and hateful the greater part are!'—'You, for example,' said Ursula, smiling, 'you have very great reason to complain of it, is it not true?'—'Spare me, I pray you, and attribute not to me the personalities of M. Blonzac. I think as he does in certain respects, but our motives are not the same.'—'I believe it: but explain to me what I am not able to conceive. Vice and virtue, I have been told, are nothing more than relative terms. The one is vice, because it hurts mankind; the other virtue, on account of the good which it occasions.'—'Exactly so.'—'To hate vice, to love virtue, is therefore only to interest ourselves in the welfare of mankind; and in order to interest ourselves, we must love them. For how can you at once interest yourself, and

hate them?'—'I interest myself in the welfare of the good whom I love, and I detest the wicked who hurt them; but the good are so very few in number, and the world is so full of bad people.'—'See there now. Your hatred at least extends not to all mankind. But do you think that those whom you love are every where so few in number? Let us make a voyage together in idea. Do you agree to it?'—'With all my heart.'—'First, in the country, are you not persuaded that there are morals; and if not virtues, at least simplicity, goodness, innocence?'—'There is also commonly distrust and craft.'—'Alas! I can easily conceive what my father has said more than once: craft and distrust are the consequence of weakness. We find them in the villagers, as in women and children. They have every thing to fear; they escape, they defend themselves as well as they can; and we observe the same instinct in most animals.'—'Yes,' said Alcestes; 'and that very circumstance forms the satyr of the cruel and rapacious animals which they have to guard against.'—'I understand you; but we are now speaking only of the country people, and you will agree with me, that they are more worthy of pity than of hatred.'—'Oh, I agree.'—'Let us pass to the cities, and take Paris for example.'—'My God! what an example you choose.'—'Very well; even in that same Paris, the common people are good: my father frequents them: he goes often into those obscure recesses where poor families, crowded together, groan in want; he says that he finds there a modesty, patience, an honesty, and sometimes even a nobleness of thinking, which moves and astonishes him.'—'And this it is which ought to set us against an unpitying world, which forsakes suffering virtue, and pays respect to successful and insolent vice.'—'Not so fast: we are at the common people. Agree that, in general, they are good, docile, courteous, honest, and that their own sincerity gives

them a confidence which is very often abused.'—'Oh, very often!'—'You love the common people then? And in all places the common people form the greater number.'—'Not every where.'—'We are speaking only of our own country: it is with that which I would reconcile you at present. Now let us come to the great folks; and tell me, first, if my father has imposed on me in it, when he has painted the manners of the women. 'As their duties,' said he, 'are included in the interior of a private life, their virtues have nothing dazzling: it is only their vices that are conspicuous; and the folly of one woman makes more noise than the discretion of a thousand. Thus the evil rises in evidence, and the good remains buried.'—'My father adds, that one moment of weakness, one imprudence, ruins a woman, and that this blemish has sometimes tarnished a thousand excellent qualities. He confesses, in short, that the vice which we most reproach women with, and which does them the most injury, hurts only themselves, and that there is no reason for hating them. For the rest, what is it you reproach us with? A little falsehood? But that is all by agreement. Instructed from our infancy to endeavour to please you, we have no other care but to conceal what will not please you. If we disguise ourselves, it is only under those charms which you love better than our own. And do you know that nothing is more humiliating to us? I am young, but I can easily perceive that the most beautiful act of our freedom is to show ourselves such as we are; but to disguise one's soul, and to disavow one's self, is of all the acts of servitude the most degrading; and we must do to self-love the most painful violence, to debase one's self to a lie, and to dissimulation? This is what I find a woman a slave in; and it is a yoke which has been imposed on us.'—'If all women thought as nobly as you do, beautiful Ursula, they would not so lightly, and in gaiety of

heart, make a mere pastime of deceiving us.'—' If they deceive you, it is your own fault. You are our kings: convince us that you love nothing so much as truth; that truth alone pleases and touches you, and we will tell it you always. What is the ambition of a woman? To be lovely, and to be loved. Very well, write on the apple, *To the most sincere;* they will all dispute it with each other in unaffected simplicity. But you have written, *To the most seducing;* and each tries who shall seduce you the best. As for our jealousies, our little animosities, our tattlings, our bickerings; all these things are only amusing to you; and you will agree that your wars are of very different consequence. Nothing remains then, but the frivolousness of our tastes and humours; but whenever you please, we shall be more solid; and, perhaps, there are many women who have seized, as it were by stealth, lights and principles which custom envied them.' —' You are a proof of it,' said Alcestes to her, ' you whose soul is so much above your sex and your age.'—' I am young,' replied Ursula, ' and I have a right to your indulgence; but the question is not concerning me; it is the world which you fly, which you abandon, without well knowing why. I have attempted the defence of the women; I leave to my father the care of accomplishing that of the men; but I tell you beforehand, that in giving me the picture of their society, he has often told me, that there were almost as few perverse minds as there are heroic souls, and that the majority was composed of weak, harmless people, who required nothing but peace and quiet.'—' Yes, peace and quiet, every one for himself, and at the expense of the person to whom it belongs. The world, mademoiselle, is composed only of dupes and knaves: now, nobody would be a dupe; and to speak only of what concerns yourself, I must tell you, that all the idle people there are at Paris of an age to please are employed morning and

evening in nothing else but in laying snares for the women.'—'Good!' said Ursula, 'they know it; and my father is persuaded that this contest of gallantry on the one side, and coquetry on the other, is nothing but a diversion, in which both are agreed. Let who will be of the party: those who like not the sport have only to keep themselves in their own corners; and nothing, he says, is in less danger than virtue, when it is real.'—'You think so?'—'I am so thoroughly persuaded of it, that if ever I commit an indiscretion, I declare to you beforehand, it will be because I shall have liked it.'—'Without doubt they like it, but they like it when seduced by an enchanter who makes you like it.'—That also is an excuse which at present I renounce: I have no faith in enchantments.'

They were got so far, when Monsieur de Laval arrived from his walk. 'What say you to Alcestes?' continued Ursula. 'He would have me tremble at being exposed in the world to the seduction of the men.'—'Why, said the father, 'we must not be too confident; I do not think thee infallible.'—'No, but you shall be my guard; and if you lose sight of me, you know what you have promised me.'—'I will endeavour to keep my word.'—'May I be in the secret?' demanded Alcestes, with a timid air. 'There is no secret in it,' replied Ursula. 'My father has had the goodness to instruct me in my duties; and if he could guide me perpetually, I should be very sure of not going astray. If I forgot myself, he would not forget me; accustomed to read my soul, he would regulate all its motions; but as he will not always have his eyes upon me, he has promised me another guide,—a husband, which may be his friend and mine, and who shall supply the place of a father.'—'Add also, and of a lover; for a young woman must have love. I would have you be discreet, but I would likewise have you be happy;

and if I had the imprudence to give you a husband who did not love you, or knew not how to please you, I should no longer have the right of taking it ill, that the desire of enjoying the greatest of felicities, that of loving and being loved, should make you forget my lessons.'

Alcestes went away charmed at the wisdom of so good a father, and more still with the candour and honesty of the daughter. 'A distinction has been made,' said he, 'between the age of innocence and of reason; but in her happy disposition, innocence and reason unite. Her soul purifies, at the same time that it enlightens itself. Ah! if there were a man worthy of cultivating gifts so precious, what a source of delicious enjoyments to him: there is nothing but this world filled with shelves, from which it is necessary to keep her at a distance. But if she loved, what would it be to her? A virtuous and tender husband would suffice her, would be to her instead of every thing; I dare believe, that at twenty-five, I was the man who suited her. —At twenty-five! and what did I know then? To amuse myself, and run into dissipations. Was I capable of filling the place of a wise and vigilant father? I should have loved her to distraction; but what confidence should I have inspired into her? It is not, perhaps, too much yet to have fifteen years more experience. But from eighteen to forty, the interval must be frightful to her. There is no thinking of it.'

He thought of it, however, all night long; the next day he did nothing else; and the day following, the first idea which presented itself to him was that of his amiable Ursula. 'Ah, what a pity,' said he, 'what a pity if she were to take to the vices of the world! her soul is pure as her beauty. What sweetness in her temper! What touching simplicity in her manners and language! They talk of eloquence; is there any truer? It was impossible for her to convince me, but she has persuaded me.

I have desired to think like her: I could have wished that the illusion, which she spread before me, were never dissipated. Why have I not over her, or rather over her father, that soft empire which she has over me? I would engage them to live here in the simplicity of nature. And what need should we have of the world? Ah! three hearts, thoroughly united, two lovers and a father, have they not, in the intimacy of a mutual tenderness, sufficient to render themselves fully happy?'

In the evening, on walking out, his steps turned, as it were of themselves, towards M. de Laval's gardens. He found him there with the pruning-knife in his hand, amidst his espaliers. 'Confess,' said he to him, 'that these tranquil pleasures are well worth those noisy ones which people like, or think they like, at Paris.'—'Every thing has its season,' replied the viscount. 'I love the country, while it is alive; I am useless at Paris, and my village has need of me; I enjoy myself there and the good which I do; my daughter is pleased and amused there; this is what attracts and retains me. But think not that I live there alone. Our little town of Bruyers is full of honest people, who love and cultivate letters. There is no part of the world where the inhabitants have gentler manners. They are polite with freedom; plain, yet informed. Candour, uprightness, and gaiety, are the character of that amiable people; they are social, humane, beneficent. Hospitality is a virtue which the father transmits to his son. The women are sprightly and virtuous; and society, embellished by them, unites the charms of decency to the pleasures of liberty. But in enjoying so sweet a commerce, I cease not still to love Paris; and if friendship, the love of letters, connexions which I hold dear, did not recal me there, the attraction of variety alone would carry me back every year. The most lively pleasures languish at last, and the sweetest become insipid to him who knows not how to vary them.

—' I can conceive, however,' said the misanthrope, ' that a society, not numerous, intimately connected with ease and truth, might supply every thing to itself; and if an offer, agreeable to Mademoiselle de Laval, had no other inconvenience in it than that of fixing her in the country, I am persuaded that you yourself . . . .'—' Why, truly,' said M. de Laval, ' if my daughter could be happy there, I should make her happiness mine; that is most certain. It is now fifty years since I have lived for myself; it is high time now that I should live for her. But we are not come to that. My daughter loves Paris, and I am rich enough to settle her there decently.'

This was enough for Alcestes; and for fear of discovering himself, he turned the conversation to gardening, by asking M. de Laval if he did not cultivate flowers. ' They pass away too soon,' replied the viscount: ' the pleasure and regret of them border so nearly on each other, and the idea of destruction intermingles I know not what of melancholy in the sentiment of enjoyment. In a word, I feel more chagrin in seeing a rose-bush stripped than joy in seeing it flourish. The culture of kitchen herbs has an interest more gradual, more supported, and, to say the truth, more satisfactory; for it terminates in the useful. While art exercises and fatigues itself in varying the scenes of a flower-garden, nature herself changes the decorations of the kitchen-garden. How many metamorphoses, for example, have these peach-trees experienced, from the very budding of their leaves to the full maturity of their fruits! talk to me, neighbour, of lasting pleasures. Those which, like flowers, endure but a day, cost too much to renew.'

Master of the father's temper, Alcestes wanted to inform himself of that of the daughter, and it was easy for him to have a private conversation with her. ' The more I penetrate,' said he to her, ' into your father's heart, the more I admire and

love him.'—'So much the better,' said Ursula; 'his example will soften your manners; he will reconcile you with those like him.'—'Like him! Ah, how few there are of them! It is to him, without doubt, a favour from Heaven to have a daughter like you, beautiful Ursula; but it is a happiness as rare to have a father like him. May the husband which the Almighty destines you be worthy both of one and the other!'—'Pray to Heaven,' said she, smiling, 'that he be not a misanthrope! Men of that cast are too difficult to correct.'—'Would you like better,' said Alcestes, 'one of those cold and trifling men, whom every thing amuses and nothing interests; one of those weak and easy men, whom the mode bends and fashions to her own taste; who are wax with respect to the manners of the time, and to whom custom is the supreme law? A misanthrope loves but few; but when he loves, he loves truly.'—'Yes, I perceive that such a conquest is flattering to vanity; but I am plain, and not vain. I would not find in a heart devoted to me asperity or moroseness; I would wish to be able to communicate to it the softness of my own temper, and that sentiment of universal benevolence which makes me see men and things on the most comfortable side. I could not spend my life in loving a man who would pass his in hatred.'—'That is not civil, for they accuse me of being a misanthrope.'—'Why it is from you, and you alone, that I have taken the idea of that character; for M. de Blonzac's humour was nothing but a fit of the pouts; and you have seen how small a matter could bring him to himself again; but a hatred of mankind, arising from reflection, and founded on principles, is horrible; and this is what you profess. I am persuaded that your aversion for the world is nothing but whim, an excess of virtue: you are not wicked, you are only rigid; and I believe you as little indulgent to yourself as to another; but this too severe and impatient

probity readers you unsociable: and you must confess, that a husband of that temper would not be entertaining.'—'You would have a husband entertain you then?'—'And entertain himself,' replied she, 'with the same things as me; for if marriage be a participation of cares, it ought in return to be a society of pleasures.'

'Nothing clearer,' said Alcestes to himself, after their conversation: 'she could not have told me her thoughts more plainly, though she had divined mine. This is for me and my comrades a discharge beforehand. And what am I thinking of? I am forty years, free and easy; it depends on myself only to be happy.....Happy! And can I be so alone, with a soul so sensible? I fly the men! Ah! it was the women, the handsome women, whom I ought to have flown. I thought I knew them sufficiently to have no more to fear from them; but who could have expected what has happened to me? I must, to my misfortune, in the corner of a province, find beauty, youth, graces, wisdom, virtue herself, united in one and the same object. It seems as if love pursued me, and that he had purposely made this dear girl to confound and distress me. And what a way she takes to trouble my repose! I detest airs; nothing more simple than she. I despise coquetry; she thinks not even of pleasing: I love, I adore candour; her soul shows itself quite naked: she tells me, to my face, the most cruel truths. What would she do more, if she had resolved to turn my brain? She is very young; she will change: launched into the world, which she loves, she will soon assume the manners of it: and it is to be believed that she will at last be a woman like the rest.... To be believed! Ah! I do not believe it; and if I believed it, I should be too unjust. She will be the happiness and glory of her husband, if he be worthy of her. And I, I shall live alone, detached from every thing, in a state of solitude and anni-

hilation; for it must be confessed, the soul is annihilated as soon as it loves nothing any longer. What do I say? Alas! if I loved no longer, would that repose, that sleep of the soul, be frightful to me? Flattering idea of a greater happiness! It is thou, thou that makest me perceive the void and dulness of myself. Ah! to cherish my solitude for ever, I should never have gone out of it.'

These reflections, and these struggles, plunged him into a melancholy, which he thought it his duty to bury. Eight days having rolled away, the viscount, surprised at not seeing him again, sent to know if he was sick. Alcestes returned answer, that in fact he had not been well for some time past. The sensible soul of Ursula was affected at this answer. She had entertained, since his absence, some suspicion of the truth; she was now the more persuaded of it, and reproached herself for having afflicted him. 'Let us go and see him,' said the viscount; 'his condition moves my pity. Ah, daughter, what a gloomy and painful resolution is that of living alone, and of being sufficient to one's-self! man is too weak to support it.'

When Alcestes saw Mademoiselle de Laval, for the first time, enter his house, it seemed as if his habitation had transformed itself into a temple. He was seized with joy and respect; but the impression of melancholy still made an alteration in his features. 'What is the matter, Alcestes?' said M. de Laval to him. 'I find you afflicted; and you lay hold of that moment to fly me. Do you think us some of those people who do not love sorrowful countenances, and who must always be accosted with a laugh? When you are easy and happy, keep at home; very well: but when you have any grief, come to me, either to pity or console you.' Alcestes listened, and admired in silence. 'Yes,' said he, 'I am struck with a thought which pursues and afflicts me: I would not, and I ought not to conceal it from you. Heaven is my wit-

ness, that after having renounced the world, I regretted nothing, when I knew you. Since, I perceive that I deliver myself up to the pleasure of your company; that my soul is attached to you by all the ties of esteem and friendship; and that when they must be broken, alas! perhaps for ever, this retreat, which I should have cherished, will be my grave. My resolution, therefore, is taken, not to wait till the charm of so sweet a connexion render the solitude in which I am to live completely odious: and in revering you, in loving both the one and the other, as two beings by which nature is to procure honour to herself, and of which the world is not worthy, I beg you to permit me to bid you an eternal farewell. Then taking the viscount's hands, and kissing them respectfully, he watered them with his tears. 'I will see you no more, sir,' added he; 'but I will hold you dear for ever.'

'Nonsense!' said M. de Laval to him; 'and who hinders us to live together, if you like my acquaintance? You have taken an aversion to the world: a mere whim; but no matter: I know you have a good heart; and though our tempers may not be the same, I see nothing incompatible in them; and perhaps they resemble each other more than you imagine. Why then take a resolution which afflicts you, and which would afflict me? You think with sorrow on the moment of our separation; it depends only on yourself to follow us. Nothing more easy than to live at Paris, free, solitary, and detached from the world. My company is not tumultuous; it shall be yours; and I promise to you, I will not force you to see any but such as you shall esteem.'—'Your goodness penetrates me,' said Alcestes, 'and I know what I owe to such kindness.'—'Nothing in it,' replied the viscount; 'such as you are, you suit me: I esteem you, I pity you; and if I deliver you up to your own melancholy, you are a lost

man. That would be a pity; and the condition which you are in permits me not to abandon you. In a month I quit the country; I have room for you; and whether under the title of friendship or gratitude, I insist on your accepting it.'—'Ah!' said Alcestes, 'that it were possible!'—'Have you, demanded the viscount, 'any obstacle? If your fortune were out of order, I flatter myself that you are not the man to blush at confessing it.'—'No,' said Alcestes; 'I am richer than a single person has need to be. I have ten thousand crowns a year, and owe nothing. But a more serious motive retains me here: you shall judge of it.'—'Come and sup with us then, and I will disperse all these clouds if I can.'—'You make a hydra,' said he to Alcestes on the road, 'of the vice and wickedness you have seen in the world. Would you try now to what a small number this class of men, who terrify you, are reduced? Make out a list of them with me this evening, and I defy you to name a hundred persons whom you have a right to hate.'—'O heaven! I could name a thousand.'—'We'll see. Remember only to be just, and to establish your complaints well.'—'Nay, it is not on particular facts that I judge them; but by the gross of their manners. For example, it is pride which I condemn in some, meanness in others. I object to them the abuse of riches, of credit, of authority, an exclusive love of themselves, a cruel insensibility to the misfortunes and wants of others; and although these vices, in every stage of life, have not features sufficiently marked formally to exclude a man from the number of honest people, they authorise me to banish him from the number of those whom I esteem and love.'—'From the instant that we talk in general,' said the viscount, 'we declaim as much as we please; but we render ourselves liable to be unjust. Our esteem is a possession, of which we are but the depositaries, and which appertains of right to him who deserves it:

our contempt is a punishment, which it depends on us to inflict, but not according to our own caprice; and every one of us, in judging of his fellow, owes him the examination which he would require if it were himself were to be judged; for, in regard to manners, public censure is a tribunal where we all sit, but to which we are also all cited: now, who of us consents that we should be accused there, on vague presumptions, and to be condemned without proofs? Consult your own heart, and see in yourself whether you duly observe the first of all laws.'

Alcestes walked with his eyes cast down, and sighed deeply. 'You have in your mind,' said the viscount, 'some deep wound, which I do not probe. I only combat your opinions, and it is, perhaps, to your sensations that I ought to apply the remedy.'

On these words, they arrive at the castle of Laval, and whether through penetration, or delicacy, Ursula steals away, and leaves them together.

'Sir,' said Alcestes to the viscount, 'I am now going to talk to you as to a friend of twenty years: your goodness engages me, and my duty obliges me to it. It is but too true, that I must renounce what formed the consolation and the charm of my life, the pleasure of seeing you, and living with you. Another man would make use of circumlocution, and blush to break silence; but I see nothing in my misfortune which I ought to dissemble. I have not been able to see with indifference what nature has formed the most accomplished in its kind: I confess it to Ursula's father, and I beseech him to forget it after I have taken my leave.'—'How,' said the viscount, 'is this the great secret? Very well, now we have it; you are in love: is there any thing in that to make you unhappy? Ah, I would fain be so yet, and far from being ashamed, I should glory in it. Come, we must endeavour to please, to be very tender, very complaisant: we are still amiable at your age;

perhaps you will be beloved.'—'Ah, sir, you do not understand me.'—'Pardon me, I believe I do. You are in love with Ursula?'—'Alas! yes, sir.'—'Very well, who hinders you from trying at least if so good a heart will be touched with the feelings of yours?'—'What, sir, do you authorise me! . . . .'—'Why not? Sure you think me very difficult! You have by inheritance a handsome fortune, and if my daughter consents, I do not see what can happen better.' Alcestes fell, in amaze, at the viscount's knees. 'Your goodness, sir, overpowers me,' said he, 'but it is of no service to me. Mademoiselle de Laval has declared to me that a misanthrope was her aversion: and this is the idea she has formed of my character.'—'That does not signify: you will change.'—'I cannot dissemble.'—'You shall not; you shall reconcile yourself to mankind, in good earnest. You will not be the first bear that has been tamed by the women.'

Supper being served up, they seated themselves at table; and never before was M. de Laval in so sprightly a humour. 'Come, neighbour, said he, 'cheer up; nothing sets us off like spirits.' Alcestes, thus encouraged, took heart. He made the most touching eulogy on the intimate commerce of souls, whom the relish of virtue, the love of truth, the sentiment of what is just and honest, unites. 'What an attraction,' said he, 'have they for each other! With what effusion they communicate! What agreement, and what harmony they form in uniting! I find here but two that are like me; and they are a whole world to me. My soul is full; I could wish to be able to fix my existence in this delicious state, or that my life were a chain of incidents resembling this.'—'I would lay a wager,' replied the viscount, 'that if Heaven were to take you at your word, you will be very sorry not to have asked more.'—'I confess it, and if I were worthy of forming yet one wish.'

—'Did not I say so? Such is man. He has always somewhat to wish for. We are but three; and yet there is not one of us who does not wish for something: what say you, daughter? For my part, I confess I ask of Heaven, with ardour, a husband whom you may love, and who may render you happy.'—'I ask also,' said she, 'a husband, who may assist me in making you happy.'—'And you, Alcestes?'—'And I, if I durst, would ask to be that husband.'—'There now are three wishes,' said M. de Laval, 'which might easily be made one.'

I have already given some intimation that Ursula had conceived for Alcestes an esteem and goodwill: the trouble she had taken to soften his temper proclaimed it; but it was only in this instant that she perceived how sensibly that disposition, which we must either love or hate, had touched her.

'Hey!' said her father, after a long silence, 'we are all three struck dumb! That Alcestes, at forty, should be confused at having made a declaration to a lady of eighteen, is natural enough; that Ursula should blush, look down, and observe a modest silence, is quite natural too; but I, who am but a mere confidant, why should I be grave? The scene is amusing.'—'Sir,' said Ursula, 'spare me, I beseech you. Alcestes gives me a mark of esteem, of which I am very sensible; and he would be angry that we should make a jest of it.'—'Would you have me believe that he is in earnest?'—'I am sure of it, and I am obliged to him.'—'You do not think so. Forty! A man of his temper.'—'His temper should estrange him from all sorts of engagements, and he knows very well what I think of it.'—'And his age!'—'That is another thing; and I beg you to forget age, when you choose me a husband.'—'Ah, child, but you are so young!' 'For that reason, I have need of a husband who is not so.'—'There is nothing then

but this unfortunate misanthropy, which you have to object to him; and I own that it is incompatible with your temper.'—'And more still with the plan which I have formed to myself.'—'And what is that plan?'—'That of nature: to live happily with my husband, to sacrifice my taste to him, if unluckily I have not his, to renounce all society, rather than deprive me of his, and not to take one step in the world without his counsel and consent. Judge, therefore, of what concern it is to me that his wisdom should have nothing savage in it, and that he should be pleased with that world in which I hope to live with him.'—'Whoever he be, mademoiselle,' replied Alcestes, 'I dare answer that he will be pleased wherever you are.'—'My father,' continued Ursula, 'takes a pleasure in bringing together to his suppers a circle of genteel people, both of the city and court; I would wish my husband to be of all these suppers, I would have him in particular be agreeable.'—'Animated with the desire of pleasing you, he will certainly do his best.'—'I propose to myself to frequent the plays, the public walks.'—'Alas! these were my only pleasures, there are none more innocent.'—'Balls too are my passion: and I would have my husband carry me there.'—'In mask, nothing is more easy.'—'In a mask, or without a mask, just as I like.'—'Right: that is a matter of indifference, as long as one is there with one's wife.'—'Nay, more, I would have him dance there.'—'Very well, mademoiselle, I will dance there,' said Alcestes with transport, throwing himself at her feet. 'Nay,' cried the viscount, 'there is no resisting that; and since he consents to dance at a ball, he will do impossibilities for you.'—'My lord thinks me ridiculous, and he has reason, but I must complete my being so. Yes, mademoiselle, you see at your feet a friend, a lover, and since you will have it so, a second father, a man, in short, who renounces life, if he is not to live for you.' Ursula

enjoyed her triumph; but it was not the triumph of vanity. She restored to the world, and to himself, a virtuous man, a useful citizen, who but for her had been lost. Such was the conquest with which she was pleased; but her silence was her only consent. Her eyes, timidly cast on the ground, dared not raise themselves to those of Alcestes: one of her hands only was suffered to drop into his, and the crimson of her beautiful cheeks expressed the transport and emotion of her heart. 'Hey!' said the father, 'you are motionless and dumb! What will you say to him?'—'Whatever you please.'—'What I please is to see him happy, provided he make my daughter so.'—'It is in his power: he is virtuous, he reveres you, and you love him.'—'Let us embrace, then, my children. This has been a happy evening, and I forebode well of a marriage, which is concluded as in the good old times. Take my advice, my friend,' continued he, 'be a man, and live with mankind. It is the intention of nature. She has given faults to us all, that nobody may be dispensed with being indulgent to the faults of others.'

THE END.

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